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VIOLET;

OR,

THE DANSEUSE:

A PORTRAITURE

OF

HUMAN PASSIONS AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH-STREET.

1836.

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VIOLET.

CHAPTER I.

"A creature not too bright or good,
For human nature's daily food,
Made up of charms and simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."
WORDSWORTH.

"WHERE is Violet?" inquired Mr. Woodville of his wife; "Lætitia, my dear, where is Violet?"

"Gone to change her shoes," answered Mrs. Woodville. "Dupas is coming. By the bye, we must ask him to dine with us soon, for he really takes great pains with Violet."

"Whenever you like, my dear. I have never determined what I mean to do with little Violet, but I am glad she is growing up so handsome, and she is such a graceful darling! She

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ought to marry a lord, at least, ought my little Violet."

"Well, if she is handsome, Violet may thank her mother for it," rejoined Mrs. Woodville, "though I didn't marry a lord, for all that; so Violet may do no better either, and it is as well not to fill her head with nonsense: no good can come of it, and she won't mind her studies."

"Now, Mr. Woodville, do you mean to call for me to-night in your cab, or am I to come home with Madlle. Laure? and where am I to have supper?"

"The Ballet, you know, as well as I do, never was or is over before one o'clock on Tuesday night: how then can I fetch you home at ten from Covent Garden?"

"Very well; but where do you mean to have supper, Charles?"

"Why, I have asked Gianini and Madame Clot, and the Norrises, to come to us to-night. We must have some Champagne, and I have desired Véry to send us a quart of white soup, and some *cotellettes aux petits poix;* then there is the cold ham, and you can get some of the partridges broiled that the Duke sent us the other day: and do see, Mrs. Woodville, that for once there is good bread-sauce at ——"

M. Dupas was announced by a very young-looking gentleman, wearing an attempt at a livery,—and M. Dupas made his appearance. He was an old man, wearing a well-made wig; his clothes fitted him to a nicety, and everything in his externals even betrayed a justifiable desire to please; his countenance was lively and shrewd, and his manners aristocratic. M. Dupas spoke English wonderfully for a foreigner, and only now and then made use of expressions at variance with his meaning. He even then avoided much awkwardness by *ne se doutant pas* of his correctness, and no one ventured to amend his "Prose."

"I am most happy to see you, Mrs. Woodville; Mr. Woodville, you are too good," said M. Dupas, as he advanced a chair; "I am most entirely delighted to see you,—how is *la Pétite?* I hope her slight touch of catarrh is quite at an end? Ah! la voici," continued the old man, while his face brightened at the entrance of his young pupil, of whom he was very fond.

"Did you find the shoes, Violet, love?" inquired Mrs. Woodville.

"I hope you have been enabled completely to master the little difficulty of the grand battement of the left foot," observed M. Dupas; "three

hours' steady attention every day would remove so very slight a difficulty. Now let us see,—very well,—begin with the exercises for the body first—*allons, commençons.*"

Mr. Woodville earned his subsistence by playing on the violoncello; luckily for him, he played uncommonly well, and he was luckier still in having his talent appreciated and well remunerated. He easily obtained engagements at one or other of the great theatres, and generally formed one of the orchestra at the King's Theatre.

In his line of life Woodville would have been rich, but, like many professional men, he was extravagant and, to his credit be it said, generous,—so that, though never very poor, he was only rich sometimes. His chief object, his delight, was—his only child—Violet.

Mrs. Woodville had been a beauty, and was still in tolerable preservation. She was very much like most other women,—having the coquetry, the caprice, the silliness and acuteness, agreeableness and weak-mindedness, common to the generality of her sex,—judging, at least, from all those with whom I happen to have been acquainted.

She was an actress, of rather a first class, and

personated ladies, and confidantes, (those that gave advice,) and did speaking queens remarkably well; on the whole, Mrs. Woodville was much looked up to by the managers, for she was never vulgar, the thing most difficult to avoid on the English stage. Her pronunciation and her gestures never made the nerves of better bred people quiver with annoyance, or harrowed up their minds with disgust. She was always well-dressed.—In short, on or off the stage, Mrs. Woodville was a very tolerable fine lady.

And now to talk of Violet, one of the prettiest creatures that ever was seen.

It may be as well to say, by way of parenthesis, that her real name was Violante,—at least, such was the name by which her mother had her christened. But her father thought it much too long, and said it was better to call her Violet.

With no reason that a special Providence should interfere;—without a governess—an angel that I know of,—or even a master in chancery, to look after her education, it should follow that Violet must needs have her ideas tinged, and her understanding improved, as it might be, by the class of people with whom she lived. She was, besides, not a little spoiled both by her parents and by M. Dupas.

In the estimation of these persons, the young lady's education had been immensely attended to, and Violet was really very accomplished, more thoroughly so perhaps than many damsels of greater pretensions, because her friends were fonder and prouder of her in proportion as her progress flattered their self-love. Violet seemed to know this by instinct, and the consciousness increased her desire to play, to sing, to speak French and Italian,—and to dance *en artiste*.

Her early education had been received in a French convent, and she had at this period returned home for good, about a year, and was now devoting a large portion of her time to achieve the ambitious views of M. Dupas, who fully intended her to become a first-rate opera-dancer. His own early days had worn away in that profession, but, having somehow grown wealthy, he now only gave lessons to the rising generation in a few great families, whose society, he said, he thought it worth his while to cultivate,—and devoted his leisure hours *con amore* to foster the talent of Violet Woodville.

The Woodvilles and M. Dupas were old friends, and, having no child of his own, theirs had become his pet, more or less, from the day of her birth. Since her return from France he

had requested permission to instruct her in an art he thought sublime. Her parents were quite undetermined about letting Violet do any thing; *i. e.* any thing that was to look like a regular profession. It was more than half vanity on both their parts, which made them give a sort of tacit assent to their child's one day or other making her début on the boards of the King's Theatre.

Mrs. Woodville, notwithstanding the way she talked *sensible*, in the first page of our story, did look forward to this scheme as to a probable means of Violet's winning the heart of some rich heir apparent, who would propose to her immediately; and Mr. Woodville liked the prospect, especially when Dupas inflamed him with the glory of being looked up to, as being the father of the first *danseuse* at the Opera.

Heirs apparent too came floating down the stream of his imagination, with this difference between him and his wife, that they occupied the back-ground of his mental picture, whilst with her they stood most glaringly in the foreground.

Of course Violet should only be permitted to accept some very particular engagement with the Laporte of the day, and then only if it did not fatigue her too much, and, moreover, only if she

liked it; "for," said Mr. Woodville, "my little Violet shall not dance, or do any thing else that does not please her."

And, in the mean time, nine hours a day were often devoted to practising her steps.

Alas!

Violet was one fine spring morning greatly engrossed by her studies—by her dancing, that is to say, which was at present her great study—when she was interrupted by a tap at the door. The blithe voice with which she answered "come in!" announced the expectation of seeing a desired object.

A young lady threw open the door, who presented a striking contrast to Violet.

She was an uncommonly handsome brunette, with regular features, and a round full face, brilliant eyes, and glossy black hair and eyebrows, united with a very coquetish expression. As to figure, she had what is called a very fine one, according to some people's method of expressing themselves, at least; but it is as well, as I have heard these terms applied to monuments in petticoats, to specify that the young lady in question had not at all that sort of anatomy. Her *tournure* was graceful though somewhat theatrical,

(habit, had become a second nature, perhaps,) and her white satin hat, her light-coloured, beautifully fitting silk gown, her *ponceau* scarf, her lemon-coloured kid gloves, and an exquisite *chaussure*, finish the sketch I wish to give of Emily Norris —Miss Emily Norris, to speak with more respect.

Violet was standing in the midst of her apartment, a little out of breath; her costume at that moment consisted of a white dimity petticoat, skirt rather short, short sleeves, and a handkerchief round her neck. Her back hair was twisted into as small a compass as it well could be, and a pair of white satin slippers (not so *very* white) completed her attire.

At this period Violet Woodville was about seventeen, and uncommonly beautiful. Her face was of an oval contour, her complexion clear, and with a rich colour, exactly the pink of the peach—which is no exaggerated description of many an English complexion.

Her features were regular and full of expression, in which I am apt to think regular features are often deficient. Her eyes were very large, bright and lovely as the gazelle's. It was not easy to define their colour, but a light hazel would be the shade they were nearest to. She had a profusion of light brown hair, to ornament

at will a little Grecian-formed head that would have served a goddess.

The impression she gave at first sight was that of a beautiful Hebe, with a soul full of mirth and *malice;* while the extreme quickness of her eye denoted a discernment of intellect which the finely-cut contour of her mouth confirmed; and when Violet Woodville laughed, the joyous intelligence that lit up her countenance rendered it inconceivably handsome.

Her figure was tall but slight, though rather inclined to *embonpoint.* She was formed with perfect symmetry: her limbs and her little feet were particularly striking from their beauty.

Graceful by nature as well as art, it was not easy to dream of anything fairer among womankind than Violet Woodville,—even there as she stood in her dimity petticoat, to receive her friend.

Miss Norris looked nineteen or twenty, and twenty she was. Great was the friendship between her and Violet. They had been together at the French convent, and similar connexions and pursuits had since kept up their intimacy; only superior years, and superior knowledge, (as Violet thought,) made her look up to Emily Norris with considerable deference.

"My dear Emily," and "my dear Violet, how

glad I am to see you," were the sort of greetings that flowed profusely for five minutes, and then the young ladies drew chairs and sat down.

"So, you are still going on with old Dupas," said Miss Norris.

"Oh, yes; but Papa and Mamma have determined nothing about me yet."

"Well, Violet, I wonder you allow that to go on. What's the use of your eternal practising of these steps, and wearing yourself to a thread-paper, with no one but old Dupas to have the pleasure of it? What's the use of all you have learnt, if it is to be done no good with? or how are you ever to have any luck, if you are not to be seen? Why, you ought to have been out these two years, I declare. You should have beheld me the other night in the new ballet! I had thunders of applause.—Did I describe my dress to you? I believe I did. My parts, you know, are mere acting, a sort of dumb show, which I do not find too fatiguing, and that is the line I advise you to adopt. Many people think me quite equal to Brocard.—I am not engaged on Saturday: Mamma has made Laporte give her one of the boxes on the fourth tier, but we have asked him to supper afterwards, as well as the new singer, Madame ———, I forget her name: you will all

come, I hope. I expect it to be pleasant; Mamma will sing one or two songs out of the new opera, and we have asked a good many people."

"Oh, I shall like it of all things," replied Violet. "But do tell me, Emily, when did you see Mr. Harcourt last?—yesterday, as you hoped?"

"Yes, I saw him yesterday."

"Well?"

"Why I don't know what to say. He is undoubtedly very much struck with me, and is quite aware he must marry me, or give me up. I do not know what to think. Oh, dear Violet! what I would give to marry a gentleman! and I certainly think I ought, with my pretensions, after all—and I am sure other people often think so, who see me, that is. At all events, I hope you will do well, Violet," added Miss Emily, with much sentiment.

Violet coloured.

"But tell me, Emily, what is poor Mr. Larray doing? Is he not very unhappy?"

"Most wretched, I do believe; and so am I too, when I think of him: but of course, if I can get Mr. Harcourt to propose, I must not think any more about Henri. After all, with the education Mamma has given me, and with the sort of *succès* I now have at the Opera, he cannot won-

der I should make—I mean, he cannot wonder that I should feel, and Mamma too, that, though Mr. Harcourt is a gentleman, and all that, that still he may propose to me, and that then Mamma of course intends I should accept him. But is it not awkward—Henri, as well as Harcourt, is asked to supper on Saturday?"

"Indeed!—then what will you do?"

"Oh," replied the young lady, with a laugh, "leave that to me; I can make Larray believe anything; and then, as to Mr. Harcourt, he is immensely conceited; I know he thinks all this time I am dying for him."

"Good heavens, Emily! but how lightly you do talk of a person you wish to marry!"

"And who would not wish it in my situation? A nice difference it will be to me all my life, whether I am to be a Lady, or whether I have to dance for bread; besides the not being able to get all the things I should like—whether I have a carriage, or go without—or get all my hats from Madame Carson's, or go on with Cérise, whom, as it is, I mean to leave off.—Of course I wish to marry Harcourt."

"But you do not care for him, I believe, at all?"

"Oh, I care for him quite enough: besides,

that is nothing—why, I would marry Henri to-morrow, if he were the *primo tenore;* but as it is, the thing would be a folly, Mamma says, though I think him charming; and I only wish he was Harcourt; but he—Mr. Harcourt, I mean—is such an uncertain person; sometimes he is so cold, and at times so capricious—so different from Henri, who is all love, gaiety, and devotion. Ah!"

Emily Norris paused, and for a brief moment looked almost softened. "Ah!" she continued, "and then he is so handsome!—Well, well, there is one thing I shall have if Mr. Harcourt marries me; I shall triumph over that audacious little Céleste, who dared to insult me by walking before me to the dressing-room, the other night, at the Opera, as if I had not the right to walk before a second-rate thing (for that is what she is) like her! She is handsome, that little Céleste, and can't endure me or Mamma; because, you know, Mamma is very particular with whom we associate; and Céleste has no longer the best of characters."

"Indeed! what a pity; she has such pretty manners."

"Those French girls always have; and they are great hypocrites."

"Mrs. Norris says she is waiting below, Miss,

for you to go to rehearsal, she says, Miss," interrupted a maid, thrusting in her head at the half-opened door.

"For heaven's sake, dearest Violet," said Miss Emily, as she rose to depart, "do make that girl leave off saying 'Miss'; it is so horrid vulgar."

"Oh, certainly; but I did not know it was," answered Violet, innocently.

CHAPTER II.

"What is the spring of human actions—say
Why do we love, hate, govern, or obey?
Whence do our noblest efforts take their aim;
For what do we incur risk, guilt, and shame?
'Tis vanity—'neath more or less controul,
The strong and ruling impulse of the soul."

Mr. Woodville, and Mrs. Woodville, and Miss Woodville did as they had been requested, and went, after the opera, to Mrs. Norris's supper.

It is necessary to say a word or two about Mrs Norris.

She had been a singer of some eminence; and between her professional talents and, we may add, *ses beaux yeux*, very discreetly applied, had realized an income sufficient for her wants and those of her daughter, and which permitted her to indulge in some few luxuries besides, exclusively of the little suppers—to one of which we are about to introduce the gentle reader.

Mrs. Norris was quite a person of good character, not such, perhpas, as would be personified

in the *beau idéal* of Mrs. Chapone, or of Mrs. Hannah More, but still, as has been said, she had made use of *ses beaux yeux* with such uncommon discretion, that the most censorious persons could find nothing worse to say of her than that, during ten years of her life passed in Italy for the improvement of her singing and for her health, she was very much admired, very gay, and delightfully amiable. Some, indeed, thought she was more particularly appreciated by a nobleman of large fortune, devoted to the fine arts; but nothing certain was ever known on this score.

The said nobleman married precisely at the same period that Mrs. Norris's husband returned from America, where he had been acting Othello and King John, George Barnwell and Scrub.

Mr. Norris, however, was a wretch of whom we will not speak, for all agreed that he behaved scandalously to his wife, and, in fact, he was said to have abandoned her. As to Emily, who was born during the ten years,—Mrs. Norris's ten years in Italy I mean,—he seemed to have no affection for the poor child whatever.

These deserted creatures prospered, nevertheless, wonderfully. Mrs. Norris never sang, save and excepting when she felt in the humour. She had no debts, and, in her present position, be-

sides the tolerably untarnished reputation which had stood so much wear and tear, she contrived, as has been observed, to have her little luxuries as well as comforts about her, and her *petits soupers* were sought after and ambitioned in the sphere in which she moved.

There were about twenty persons assembled when the Woodvilles entered Mrs. Norris's salon.

The society consisted of singers of celebrity; of about half a dozen young men of good family, coming under the denominations of roués, gamblers, or otherwise imperfect as to character, but still vastly entertaining, and very fashionable young men especially. Then there was a young architect, a remarkably conceited painter, a literary man who had written a book entitled "Songs of the Druids" (not generally known), a translator of French vaudevilles, who thought himself better than Scribe; two or three principal comedians, with a wife or two, women of entire respectability, though of no consideration; the Pasta, the Sontag, the Taglioni, and the De Beriot of the day;—these, with two or three attachés of foreign missions, and a few more such "small deer," were the component parts of Mrs. Norris's party.

On the whole, it is well to let the reader at

once into the secret, that it was chiefly given to induce Mr. Harcourt to propose to Miss Norris.

As yet he had not arrived; but there were plenty of lights and ices, occasional singing, and desperate flirtations, chiefly between the young men of imperfect character and some charming women, who were there with their husbands, be it understood, for Miss Emily's sake. Indeed, on her account, and to impress Mr. Harcourt with a favourable opinion of the society she kept, Mrs. Norris had been particularly fastidious in her invitations on this occasion.

Miss Norris (whose maid I would rather not have been that evening) was dressed with the most studied attention, to give a good display to her beauty, to enhance it, if that were possible, and to be in the latest fashion, combining all this with many more items, that a person like myself, not versed in all the minutiæ of female attire, is incompetent duly to expatiate upon. But all these niceties of art were intended to give relief to an air of infinite simplicity, and a *laisser aller* demeanour of exceeding abnegation of every idea connected with her personal appearance.

This acmé of perfection Emily conceived she had achieved, and she was greeted by her mo-

ther's triumphant approval. It was, undeniably, no small advantage to Emily, the being under the guidance of such a mother as Mrs. Norris. She was a woman such as there are but few to be met with. She possessed the supreme art of good arrangement; nothing in her establishment was ever displaced. She had a horror of outward and visible errors, and a keen perception of the fitness of things. Everything connected with herself she shielded from the minutest obloquy, and it was her creed that none, if possible, should ever have occasion to descant upon the externals of life. She had the good taste to avoid pretension where it would have been laughable; yet her French china, her chintz, her wines, her ecarté tables, her music, her very flowers and ices were better than, or, at any rate, might stand competition with, those of any other house in London.

Emily was seated on an ottoman, and near her stood a handsome young man, well dressed, and of unassuming manners, so good looking, and with so good an air, that, if he were not what is called a gentleman, there was no outward just cause or impediment to his being one.

His countenance expressed anything but happiness, and Miss Emily was evidently embar-

rassed in his presence; a feeling which, from whatever cause arising, she hardly cared in her spoiltness to conceal.

"Why do you turn your head so often to the door?" asked the young man, rather impatiently.

Miss Norris coloured, and replied, "Mamma has desired me particularly to assist her in receiving these people. You forget that at home it is absolutely necessary to be civil."

"Oh! if that is the only reason, I have nothing more to say."

A little put out of temper, Emily rejoined:—

"What did you suppose was my reason, Monsieur Larray, as the one I have given never occurred to you?"

"I have no wish to say anything disagreeable, or to offend you just at this moment, but I should like to know whether you expect Mr. Harcourt this evening?"

"Mamma asked him—that is, I think she did."

"Are you really uncertain whether he is asked or not?"

"Ask Mamma,—there she is,—if you are so anxious to know, she can tell you,"—and, to avoid saying more, Emily flew to meet the Woodvilles.

"How beautiful Violet looks to-night," she exclaimed to Mr. Woodville; "on the stage she would *far furore*."

At this moment two young men entered the room. The one who first advanced had good features, but a disagreeable expression; he was tall in person, with a nonchalant, indolent, and rather impertinent air; altogether, however, he was handsome. He glanced with an assured look round the room, and it was a great relief to his countenance, when it kindled with some pleasure, on beholding Emily Norris.

Nothing could be better than the reception Mr. Harcourt met with, (for Mr. Harcourt it was,) from both the Mother and Daughter of the house.

"You will allow me," he said, "to introduce a friend of mine, I am sure,—I knew, Mrs. Norris, I might venture to bring him;" and Mr. Harcourt presented the gentleman who had accompanied him. "Mr. D'Arcy, Mrs. Norris,—Mrs. Norris, Mr. D'Arcy."

Mr. Harcourt himself seemed actually forgotten in the empressement manifested to receive his friend; it appeared, in fact, as if the latter had occasioned a general sensation in the society.

The women—those at least who knew Mr.

d'Arcy—evidently wished to attract his attention: those who did not know him did their best to induce him to seek their acquaintance. All the young men appeared glad to see, and to welcome him amongst them.

To Mrs. Norris he was now the first object, for, with an intuitive perception, she beheld in Mr. d'Arcy the possible arbiter of her daughter's fate. Mrs. Norris had taken some trouble to analyze Mr. Harcourt's character, and she thought he was just the person to be decided by the opinion of another, as to whether or no it would be possible for him to marry Emily. She had before heard of his intimacy with Mr. d'Arcy, who was not unknown to her by name or character, and she feared him immensely.

It was perhaps lucky that Emily was not so much *au fait* at all this as her mother. She wished to please Mr. d'Arcy as Harcourt's friend, but without foreseeing all the importance of so doing.

Violet, in the mean time, knowing few people, modest by nature, and considering herself not yet come out, had discovered a corner, into which she retreated as much as she could, and where she found leisure to observe all that was passing, until her attention became strongly riveted by one

person only. The one person who thus arrested her regards was Mr. d'Arcy; and, had Violet herself been interrogated as to the wherefore, she would have been much at a loss to account for the sort of fascination under which she laboured.

It was not that Mr. d'Arcy struck her as handsomer or more pleasing than many others whom she had seen, or that he possessed any single charm to strike her forcibly and at once. But his presence filled up some imperfect and undefined feeling, if I may so express it. A strange sort of contentment stole over her as she gradually sank into reverie, while yet noticing every change of bearing in the new comer. It seemed to Violet a pleasant event in her existence to have met this person, and she dwelt upon his presence with a secret pleasure that she was herself hardly aware of; her mind, however, became impressed with one object, and her observation centered upon it.

Mr. Harcourt soon took a seat by Emily, and a very animated conversation was carried on between them.

She was really uncommonly handsome, and the sort of person to make a vast impression on most men, and this evening she looked more than usually charming. On Mr. Harcourt's seating him-

self by Emily, Mr. Larray disappeared unseen by her, perhaps at that moment uncared for.

When Mr. d'Arcy was introduced to Miss Norris, he conversed with her for a short time, and the melodious voice and discreet words of Emily could not fail to produce an impression favourable to her; but at this moment it was that something struck Violet as unpleasing in Mr. d'Arcy,—his smile was cold, and his regard expressed penetration, but indifference.

At supper, Emily sat between Harcourt and his friend. To Violet's surprise, as she was following her father to the supper-room, Mr. Larray re-appeared, and offered her his arm.

"I almost thought you were gone," exclaimed Violet.

"I did go, Miss Woodville, but I am returned; I conceived I was wrong, and that reflection causes me to be here now."

"But what made you discover all at once that you were wrong?"

"My better judgment, I believe, as I walked down the street. Where will you sit, Miss Woodville?"—

During the supper, Mr. Harcourt rather kept in the background, that his friend might engross Emily; and at one time, Mr. d'Arcy's animated

countenance and eager conversation gave him the air of making love upon his own account.

Emily was in the highest spirits: she thought she had won a new admirer. She laughed and talked—her complexion glowed, she shook her ambrosial curls, and her eyes were dazzling with the consciousness of success.

Mr. d'Arcy bent over her, and once Violet thought he looked as if he admired her very much. —Mr. Harcourt seemed forgotten: at the moment he appeared to think so, too, for he suddenly reinstated himself in his share of the conversation with Emily.

Some one asked Mr. d'Arcy to drink wine: he turned to answer, and Violet was again struck with the cold indifference of his expressive countenance. From his great attention to her friend, and the effect it had produced upon her, it was reasonable to suppose that some trace of the feelings of the previous instant would have lived for a moment's space, but no—it was the same regard—almost contemptuous in its calmness, and no trace of emotion was perceivable.

"What is that gentleman's name?" inquired Mr. Larray.

"He is called Mr. d'Arcy. What do you think of him?"

"He is very good-looking."

"Oh, I did not mean his looks."

"Well, I am also struck by his being different from most other people. His air is good, but it is peculiar. He is bored here, or perhaps he is bored everywhere."

"How do you know he is bored?"

"Look at his countenance."

"Ah, now; but it was animated enough an instant ago."

"What? when he was talking to Emily? Yes; he was endeavouring to understand her."

"To understand her?"

"Yes; I mean the sort of person she is; he was endeavouring to penetrate her mind."

"Oh! well, I hope he has succeeded."

"He thinks he has, I dare say. Now I do not much like this Mr. d'Arcy; there is something about him that wounds the *amour propre* of other people. But yet I could much rather forgive Emily for behaving ill to me for that man's sake, than I can for Mr. Har——"

"Hush—he will hear you. But why this distinction?"

"The one she might prefer to——the other she cannot—she does not, I know."

"But yet you say, you don't like Mr. D'Arcy," ——(the rising from supper interrupted Violet.)

It was by this time Sunday morning: one of the ladies, whose face was rather the worse for wear, poor thing! proposed sacred music. She had never heard any, and was very curious to hear some, she said, and Mrs. Norris she knew sang that sort of thing so well. Being uncommon, the proposal succeeded vastly; and the roues and the charming women were in ecstacy!

Harcourt and D'Arcy approached each other, and took seats, without noticing, apparently, that a large vase, filled with roses and mignionette, and an alabaster Venus embracing Adonis rising from the midst of the flowers, concealed an occupant of the chair behind the tripod table on which stood the vase; or else, under cover of "O Absalom, my son!" they conceived their words would fall unheeded.

Or, perhaps, between his desire to talk to his friend—his passion—and the champagne he had drunk Mr. Harcourt might have let matters of greater moment than this pass without scrutiny. Violet, therefore, overheard their conference; and, thanks to the scanty drapery of the Venus, could partially observe the countenance of one of the speakers.

"What do you think of her?" enquired Mr. Harcourt, in an agitated tone of voice.

"As to looks?—that she is beautiful."

"D'Arcy, I am desperately in love with that girl."

"Yes—it is a pity she thinks she can marry you."

"Oh, but she has no reason for thinking so, and I doubt if she does; in fact, I have to-night been playing a desperate game with her.—I talked of going abroad, and dropped a few words as if I meant to cut her."

"Have you ever thought of trying her affection? it does answer occasionally, you know. Have you flattered her sufficiently? have you adored her sufficiently?"

"Oh, every thing! She is proof against every attack."

"Then she must think you a marrying man: how very unlucky you are, my poor fellow! it is the worst notion she could have taken into her head. I do not know how to advise you."

"I am passionately in love—there is nothing I have not done."

"Why, I am not so sure of that—you are so d—d indolent,—have you sworn oaths enough?

Good heavens! I would feign Catholic, and bring to the hammer every saint in the calendar."

"Oh, don't be a fool, D'Arcy, when I am distracted."

"Seriously, then. Have you tried suicide?"

"No. I have not yet."

"Well, then—go on that tack to-night,—blowing, your brains out, mind—poisoning, or drowning does not much touch a woman now-a-days; but they don't like fire-arms."

"But if that fail?"

"In that case, I cannot help you. With those eyes, the girl has no business to be coy; and I am much mistaken if her mother ought not to be put in the pillory for her very virtue."

"But my Emily!" exclaimed Harcourt, in a love-sick voice, "give me your candid opinion of her, D'Arcy. I can bear to hear any thing from you."

"Well, I think her very handsome: magnificent eyes, and the figure of a goddess. I should like her myself."

"But would you marry her?"

"Marry her! I marry her?—*No!*—my ideas on that point may be uncommon, but they are unalterable!"

"Then, what would you say, if I told you I had serious thoughts of it?"

It was a faint, but bitterly-sneering laugh with which D'Arcy replied to this appeal.

"Simply," he answered in words at last, "that if you ever found reason to repent your choice, you would deserve no pity.—The world would despise your weakness,—I should, for one, and you would live to curse the most irretrievable folly you could possibly commit. For heaven's sake, Harcourt, do not be such a fool," continued Mr. d'Arcy, with hushed vehemence,—"marry that girl! an opera-dancer! and the daughter of that woman, whose very outside better-seeming, is a greater abomination than the undisguised profligacy of that little French devil I showed you last night! Never—never! I beseech you, Harcourt—think twice of such perdition as this act of madness would be!"

"Ah! you have no heart, and are incapable of comprehending me."

"Possibly, in your acceptation of the term; but you asked me for the truth—I have given it you in all its nakedness, and would tell it you, again and again, to save you from such a fate as this, a fate in which it amazes me that you can even dream of involving yourself."

"But you make no allowance for circumstances; she is virtuous; and would not such a creature as that make venial any error I might commit?"

"No; there are some things that not any number, or any quality, of *such creatures* can palliate."

"You are a brute, D'Arcy."

"Thank you," replied Mr. d'Arcy, calmly: "you requested my advice, and I bestowed it generously: if the truth offend, I am blameless; so now let us go and hear 'Jephthah's Daughter'."

D'Arcy rose, and moved towards the piano; whilst his friend, with inherent spoiltness, devoted himself, for the rest of the evening, still more assiduously, to Emily Norris.

It was a great relief to Violet, when this conversation ended. Well aware, that it had not been meant for her ears, she would have moved from her ambush at its very commencement, had not excessive timidity absolutely fixed her to the spot, and the additional awkwardness of betraying her presence, as the supposed tête-à-tête proceeded, continued to rivet her to her seat.

Her father was attending to the music; and her mother was absorbed in self-complacent admiration opposite a mirror, and in listening to the whispered remarks of some of her neighbours. Mr. Larray was standing in a door-way somewhat

apart from the society, and seemed occupied with no very agreeable train of thought: he at last espied Violet alone, and approached her.

"I shall not see Miss Norris again for some time, Miss Woodville," said Mr. Larray, "and perhaps you would be kind enough to tell her, that I avoided bidding her good bye, because I feel wretched; and I doubt if such a parting, as ours would too likely be, could make me less so; but tell her I shall be rejoiced to know that she is happy, and that I do not persevere in pressing my attachment upon her, lest I should interfere with results much more splendid than any my alliance could offer her"——(Mr. Larray sighed;) "and, on the whole, more—that is to say, better for her—I begin to think so now; and it would be preferable to die each day than to marry Emily, if she thought it a sacrifice. Adieu, Miss Woodville!—you deserve a better lot than to be one of these people: you are not even a coquette, and I hardly think you will ever become one."

Violet began an answer; but Mr. Larray left her ere she had uttered three words.

There was now more talking than singing, and more of laughing than of either. The flirtations were getting desperate. The middle of the room was an absolute desert, while the boudoirs and

door-ways were filled by tender couples. Arm-chairs and bookcases, cabinets and commodes—anything, in short, that could make an angle with anything, was dexterously put in requisition.

A groupe still remained round the piano-forte; but it consisted only of ladies with jealous husbands extant in the room, and of men, like Woodville, honester than the others, and with incumbrances.

Harcourt's countenance, as he leant over the back of Emily's arm chair, still bore the shade of displeasure, which his friend's remarks had called up. It is true "Il ne faut pas toujours avoir raison, pour plaire," says the Prince de Ligne; but it is no less true, "il faut souvent plaire pour avoir raison."

D'Arcy himself occupied a place near the music, and, from time to time, was assiduous to Mrs. Norris. Some people might have fancied he liked that discreet lady, and Violet would have been of that opinion, had she not overheard his abuse of her. I rather think, too, Mrs. Norris herself thought that Mr. d'Arcy liked her; and she was a very good judge. He was, however, one of the first to withdraw. Then Violet began to yawn. and, taking courage, advanced to her father.

"Are you not going home, Papa?" she inquired; "it is very late, I think."

CHAPTER III.

"Pardon this digression;
But, whatsoe'er may be a man's profession,
Whether the trade be noble, or ignoble,
Whether he steer a frigate, or a coble,
He finds some vast importance in the calling,
And deems the universe is kept from falling,
And all the interests of man affected,
By that to which his talents are directed."—ANON.

THE evening passed at Mrs. Norris's had given Violet much to think of. It was the first time she had found herself in so mixed a circle. Her mother had hitherto taken her very little into society, and this evening's events had given her much to reflect upon. She had gained experience, but her reflections thereupon were not all agreeable ones.

Accustomed, during her short life, to one class only, she had had no means of forming a judgment as to its comparative merits, and with Emily Norris, as her most intimate friend, Violet was not likely to be led to much abstract reasoning that could prove correct. Her knowledge

acquired from books was not of a very serviceable kind. Her father possessed a collection of French dramatic authors, and some odd volumes of Pope, of Milton, and of Shakspeare; a few plays of Otway, Congreve, and Rowe; the works of Sheridan and Mrs. Inchbald; a good many magazines, volumes of farces, &c., &c. Such was the composition of Mr. Woodville's library. Now and then he brought home a new novel, lent him by a friend, which was often returned unread; but, generally, the most modern prose that entered his house was an evening paper or the "Age," varied occasionally by a French vaudeville, or the new play as then performing at the theatres royal Covent Garden, or Drury Lane.

Miss Woodville's education, *i. e.* her external accomplishments, had been so much attended to, that she had not had time to acquire a love of reading, and no one in her whole life had ever inculcated it upon her as necessary, or even desirable. Violet, then, had, as may be imagined, but scanty means of appreciating her own condition, and was not aware that players, singers, and dancers were the light weight, and not the heavy ballast in the scale of social opinion; nor that disagreeable people of a much lower grade

ranked above them in the statistics of respectability.

She did not know how seldom in the minds of most people morality and an opera-dancer were in approximation. Still less was she aware that the sentiments of her parents, and even her own, were influenced by their mode of existence, and that no purity of mind, no principles, however well regulated, no stoicism of virtue, however well guarded, can utterly withstand the force of example.

Either the virtuous become repulsive and austere from excess of precaution, or sin doubly by exclaiming too eagerly against "the mote that is in their brother's eye," or chime in with the small vices and gentler frailties of the corrupt; not doubting, while baser crimes are kept at an immeasurable distance, that so wide apart are their present practice and real excellence.

No models of right and wrong had been set before Violet, but such as (if I may use the expression) she had found ready to her hand. Her native impulses were all good, but example had done nothing to strengthen them. Good inclinations are like raw materials, and must have much trouble taken with them before they can be made serviceable.

Mr. d'Arcy's contemptuous observations upon

Mrs. Norris, and his frivolous praise of her daughter, placed them in a light in which Violet had never seen them before. She then passed in review Emily's calculating encouragement of Mr. Harcourt, and her ungenerous treatment of Mr. Larray. She compared her friend and her mother with many others that she knew of, and was compelled to own that they did not lose by the comparison.

When once we begin to reason, the process is a rapid one, and it was a sickening moment to Violet when she drew the conclusion that she herself was one of the despised class, whose degradation a thousand D'Arcys would be ready to infer; and that no virtue could be a shield against the opprobrium of marrying an opera-dancer.

But why was D'Arcy's opinion to weigh so greatly with her? Whatever was the reason, it did —it might be his voice, his manner, his air, that thus impressed her. But why not say at once he pleased,—and leave the how, to be defined by others, who in like manner have been charmed, while the days, the months, and the years have flown by, yet have they never paused and asked, "*Wherefore?*"

During the latter part, however, of this, to her, eventful evening, the charm had been somewhat

broken: Violet half feared that he who had so excited her interest, wanted kindness of heart; she likewise felt a little terror at the harshness of his remarks; but even these considerations could not change the nature of her predilection; a feeling, by-the-bye, which neither by word nor look had Mr. d'Arcy upheld for himself,—for, beautiful as Violet Woodville was, he had never noticed, most probably, had never seen her.

La destinée que Dieu nous a fait, n'est jamais celle que nous faisons à nous-même *.

Violet suddenly determined she would not be an opera-dancer, but she was quite at a loss how to convey this resolution to her parents. She rarely now gave the same attention to assist the unwearied zeal of M. Dupas, who was at fault in discovering the cause of his pupil's diminished ardour, and urged upon her family with more than his usual seriousness, the importance of seeking an engagement with the manager of the King's Theatre.

About this time there was a new ballet in preparation, but the heroine was not to be the chief dancer. This character was given to Miss Norris, whose forte was in the pantomimic parts. The

* Massillon.

ballet was intended by the manager to be a chef-d'œuvre: there were in it a good many first-rate, prominent parts, so that he would be enabled with less squabbling than usual to content the ambitious views of the whole corps de ballet. The dresses were to be such as had never yet been seen. The scenery, the decorations,—but we will not write the whole of a newspaper paragraph.

In the course of the ballet a Venus was to appear, and Miss Norris was to be the Venus. There was very considerable trouble in determining in what attire (perhaps if any) the goddess ought to appear.

It was, in fact, a very difficult point to decide. Her earthly representative was inclined to a blaze of silver and jewels, while there was a strong party in favour of a little plain gauze, and much *tricot*.

There being no original costume to refer to, was the cause of so much indecision. Upon the whole, the predominating opinion maintained it to be quite indecorus to adorn a Venus with earthly embellishments, and that the object to be aimed at, was to give as ethereal an appearance as could be attained, without too great a risk of a remonstrance from the Bishops.

Miss Norris again had a great idea of precious stones becoming her exceedingly; and during the dispute a mock tiara of diamonds and rubies was always in her mind's eye, encircling her radiant brow. She remembered once before producing a great sensation in some head gear of this kind, and matters were getting to look unpleasant, for Miss Norris was not a little spoilt, and had a very good opinion of her own merits and judgment; when lo! a fortnight before the ballet was to be brought forward, in getting out of a dirty hackney-coach at one of the rehearsals, her foot slipped on the muddy step, and Emily screamed.

It was true she had only violently sprained her ancle, but all hopes of being able to glide down from the scenic heaven upon a cloud, on that day fortnight, were put out of the question by this unlucky accident.

The manager, the dancers, the figurantes, the scene-painters, and even the very scene-shifters were in consternation; nobody of course pitied the only person who really suffered.

The season was already far advanced; and if the ballet were not produced now, it would not be worth the manager's while to let it appear at all. At the same time he did not see what Venus there was that he could depend upon. He re-

viewed, in his mind's eye, every demoiselle of the green-room (by-the-bye, there is no green-room at the Opera), but not one of them was sufficiently handsome: there was one who might do very well, as to face, but was somewhat too bulky in person. In vain the manager depicted to himself the young lady, laced in to the uttermost power of the strongest stay-lace—there would still exist a preponderance in her form which would not exactly do for a Venus; and where to turn for a better, he knew not.

At this critical juncture M. Dupas, as an old intimate of the manager's, was consulted by him on the momentous topic. Visions of glory at once flitted before the intellectual optics of the dancing-master; he hastened to have them realized. Yes, he knew a young lady, of the most distinguished beauty, full of grace and talent for the profession—in a word, a pupil of his own. Could she be persuaded to undertake the engagement, and did it suit the views of Monsieur to give her one, he (Dupas) could not but view it as a compact mutually advantageous and desirable.

All this sounded well; but the manager, who was a cautious man, evinced hesitation. He said he must see the young lady; he would go the length of believing all that M. Dupas said of her

accomplishments, but still he must see her before he in the slightest degree compromised himself.

The manager, in accordance with a previous arrangement with M. Dupas, made at the termination of their conference, called on the following day on Mr. Woodville, with whom he was previously acquainted, and had an opportunity of satisfying himself of the correctness of Dupas' report.

Violet was in the room with her father when the manager entered: she was introduced to him, and, all unconscious of the object of his visit, she bore his scrutinizing looks with modest assurance; and, having staid long enough in the room to complete the excellent impression her first coup-d'œil had conveyed to him, made the earliest excuse for retiring, and left her father and this important personage to their deliberations. M. Dupas shortly after knocked at the door, and was added to the council of three—for a council it soon became.

Mr. Woodville was dazzled by the brilliant chance it offered for his daughter's début; but Mrs. Woodville, he said, must be consulted—their mutual intentions respecting their daughter had hitherto been so undetermined, &c. &c.: he

would, in a day or two, inform the manager whether Miss Woodville could avail herself of his very obliging proposal; and after a little more conversation of the same sort, the manager took his leave, thinking that Mr. Woodville only held out, in order to obtain the offer of a higher salary, and which he fully resolved to augment on the morrow.

"Do you hesitate, Mr. Woodville?" exclaimed M. Dupas, the moment they were alone.

"You forget my wife, my dear Dupas."

"Your wife! Her own mother can never imagine any opposement to the future glory of la pétite: can any thing be more ravishing than the prospect of the début she will make? The new ballet, for which the whole of the town are mad with knowing of! To be at once *lancée*, as the object of enthusiasm and admiration and *extasiement!* What is there that she may not expect? I am all breathless with the anxiety of my feelings; that the whole desire of my life should be so *sublimément réalisé*,—and *est il possible* that you are not penetrated, in and out, with your good fortune! This it is to be an Englishman!—the porter that you drink, and your bad climate, I suppose; so that you have no fine sentiments—no conception of the really great: you are inca-

pable of things elevated; and Miss Woodville, my Violet—my little child—my pupil—my bijou! your own daughter—will be abandoned by you—she is to be sacrificed, the *pauvre enfant! Hélas! on a de grands malheurs dans ce monde.*"

M. Dupas ceased speaking; but he sighed profoundly. The poor man's anguish was not feigned. Woodville, who was used to his tirades, said a few pacifying words, and then went really to consult Mrs. Woodville.

The manager, in the meantime, as he left the house, walked up the street, muttering and thinking to himself—"Beautiful creature, certainly! and will do—but she must be rouged with care: I can take an opportunity of seeing to that myself. While they are at their first engagements, these husseys are tractable: yes, if I am not mistaken, I have made a *find:* the ballet will attract, if it is only by means of the Venus; and I am not sure whether the beauty of this young Houri will not look much more ethereal than that of the black-eyed Norris girl. This one is the most uncommon style of the two. I only foresee one difficulty—she is too respectable. The effect would be perfect, and my fortune would be made, if I could only have her properly dressed: gossamer robe, fastened by a zone—neck and shoul-

ders quite bare, or a mere loop, that she might not be called Eve in the newspapers; and, to save appearances with the Saints, ...—We shall see; I am sure it will answer; and the price of Opera-glasses will rise."

Violet was taken by surprise, and found she had not courage to make her parents an avowal of the dislike she felt to the career they now in good earnest desired she should embrace. They considered it an opportunity not to be lost.

Violet felt ashamed of her own feelings, perhaps of not having sooner discovered them; besides, after the pains that had been taken with her, how was she to find the heart to declare that it had all been time thrown away?

She thought of poor M. Dupas and his despair at such a result to his many lessons. She then reflected on the money expended upon her education, and the bad return it would be to refuse the only pecuniary means she knew she could ever have in her power of aiding her parents.

The finale was, that, between shame and shyness, and the innate sweetness of her disposition, Violet's resolution gave way. But the sad feeling of self-degradation that accompanied her compliance made her in secret shed bitter tears, and often did she wish that her lot had been

differently cast, while she almost lost the hope of rising above the level on which she mentally conceived herself to be placed.

Still she bestowed attention on her profession, more even than she had devoted to it for months past. She desired, at least, to excel in her new career.

She attended rehearsals as little as possible, for these she hated, but at home, and with the unremitting pains-taking of M. Dupas, she lost no opportunity of studying her part. It was not a very difficult one, and had it been more so, Violet's extreme beauty, and an exquisite costume, would have counterbalanced many defects in the performance.

In the meantime the renown of the new ballet had gone abroad, and when the night for its first performance arrived, not a box was vacant, and there was not standing room in the pit. The most interesting conversations were momentarily suspended as the curtain, drawing up, discovered the first scene to the expectant audience.

"They say there is to be a new dancer to-night, the most beautiful girl that was ever beheld," said Lord John to his Pendant.

"An Englishwoman, by the name, though,"

said a lady, "so she will be awkward, I am afraid; all Englishwomen are."

"That's true,—but there's that Miss Norris did it uncommonly well. Horace," whispered the speaker, "did not she break her leg or something, jumping out of Harcourt's cab?"

"Either her leg, or her rib, or something. They swear Harcourt means to marry her."

"Does he? then I will tell Crocky to give him good advice and desire him not."

"Hush,—here is the new girl, by Jupiter! If I have not dropped my opera-glass!"

It was in the middle of one of the most enchanting scenes of the ballet that Violet Woodville, personifying the goddess of love and beauty, made her first public appearance on a stage.

Nervous to the last degree, Violet almost fainted under the violence of her emotions. The stage-lamps restored her courage a little, as they always do, and the imperious necessity of not giving way, did still more to sustain her. She profited by the advice of M. Dupas,—to take no heed of the audience, and to think of her part only, not of her judges.

Suddenly a loud rush of applause rang on her ears, and the young girl was again on the point

of being overcome. These were not the whispered tones of admiration falling like music on the ear of the unprotected novice, but the loud and unexpected shout of the admiring multitude that first greeted the Violet, as incense to her beauty. Some minutes passed ere she could quite regain her self-possession.

The scene was at length over, and then she threw herself into her father's arms and shed tears. M. Dupas, in his enthusiasm, quite felt as if she were his own child as he pressed her to his heart. Tears streamed down his cheeks without his knowing it, while Mr. Woodville, as a younger man, felt quite ashamed of his own emotion, and tried to smile and listen to the congratulations of friends and by-standers.

Woodville himself was engaged as one of the orchestra, but for this night he had requested his congé.—"I could not play," he said, "whilst my daughter danced."

Nothing could exceed the entire success that attended Miss Woodville. Her beauty and her extreme gracefulness left nothing to desire,—but above all, her uncommon beauty! Her figure was so finished by nature and set off by art, that it alone represented perfectly the *beau idéal* of a

Venus. Still, lovely as she looked on the stage, it was considered necessary to have a closer inspection, ere a decided opinion could be pronounced by the cognoscenti, ready as they were to acknowledge that, at the distance from which they had seen her, it was no exaggerated praise to declare she looked divine.

Deafening plaudits hailed the finale, and even the ladies lingered in their boxes to see the last of "the new opera-dancer."

Her parents' joy, and her own most natural vanity, gave some consolation to Violet in the first steps of the path on which she had so reluctantly entered. In one week a new existence opened to her.

She never went to the theatre without the protection either of her father or her mother, and in this respect it is due to her parents to say that they did their duty.

The young men rushed behind the scenes to make love, and settlements too, if they might; but Violet's modest manner, and her father's watchfulness, shielded her from the lightest word of offence. By turns, surprised, excited, flattered, pleased, and rarely mortified, Violet gained courage, and earned her distinction. She made

new acquaintances, she mingled in a larger circle, and acquired some of that worldly knowledge in which she had hitherto been so deficient.

She was gay, if not happy besides, for she had little time for reflection, and nothing positive to regret. Often too the real, or seeming brilliancy of her position, would shed its enchantment over the visions that rose to her imagination, as they will do to that of every young person who has the world before them still.

Delightful moments, when all the disagreeable realities of life are obliterated by the brief joys of an hour! and when in a paradise of fiction it is possible to forget that if we are not to be single among our fellow-creatures, as happiness is not theirs, neither will it exist without alloy for ourselves! Yet would I say, dream on; for, after-life may have its pleasures and its sanguine hopes, but never again can we derive, as we have done, from the resources of a bright, unbruised spirit, that poetry of thought that can create a heaven on earth to the very young. The scene is sure to change, and the clouds of sorrow are ever gathering, though unseen by us, ready to burst and dim the sunshine of our happiest moments. Though again and again the elastic mind rises

above the storm, yet we see that mind crushed by degrees, and faintly growing to mistrust present happiness, while futurity is only seen through the medium of the worst despondency. Alas! to change it thus, how much sorrow must have lingered o'er the now subdued and doubting spirit, that once knew but the certainty of every scheme it cared to realize!

Miss Norris was still confined to the house with her sprained ancle, for having walked about when she was told to keep on her sofa, it suddenly became worse, and she was now obliged to be careful from fear of another relapse.

Emily thought she was very glad of Violet's *auréole de gloire,* but in her heart she was a little jealous, which, however, it was very natural she could not conceive herself capable of being in the least possible degree.

Miss Norris amused herself every day during her illness, by putting on the most becoming dressing gowns she could find, and the listening for Mr. Harcourt's cab, either driving to her door for him to inquire very particularly how she was, or oftener still to make those inquiries himself in person.

Still he did not propose, and the season was drawing to an end.

Emily, however, grew more virtuous every day, and Mrs. Norris was beginning to think whether it would not be a good thing for her to do, as she had read in fashionable novels that managing mammas sometimes did; *i. e.* declare that her daughter's affections were irreparably engaged, and her happiness destroyed; and that therefore Mr. Harcourt must either discontinue his visits, or he must propose.

Mrs. Norris discussed these measures with Emily, but did not find her daughter so docile as she was wont to be; and Miss Norris one day flatly told her mother that she begged the affair with Mr. Harcourt should be left to her own caring for, lest he should be worried away from her altogether by the manœuvring of other people, which Emily averred always spoiled these affairs.

Miss Norris was agreeably roused one morning from a fit of low spirits by the rapid wheels of Mr. Harcourt's cabriolet, driving to her door much earlier than usual.

He must be come to propose, thought Emily. "Mamma," exclaimed the young lady at the top of her voice, for mamma was in another room, "Mamma, am I becoming? Mamma, where's mamma? mamma—don't you hear, am I becom-

ing?" Mrs. Norris now rushed in, and the sight of Emily rolling her curls round her fingers united to her important question, and the most imploring interrogative eyes, told her, at once, of the arrival she had not sooner learnt.

"Here, my dear,—here's a little,—there's yet a moment,—I will detain him—make haste,—not too much, mind." These broken sentences were spoken with reference to an old bit of rouge which the provident parent drew from her pocket, and which with the last injunction of "not too much, mind," she thrust into her daughter's hand.

"Thank you, mamma," said the young lady in a sweetly grateful voice, and the right shade being cleverly applied, Emily was happy in her mind, and felt she had all her smiles at command to enable her to overcome this hitherto obdurate, but not hopelessly unproposing man.

"My dear Emily," said Mr. Harcourt, "I am anxious to know how soon you will be well enough to join a water-party down to Greenwich, we are to make it quite a fête; Stanmore is to manage it all, and it is to be the pleasantest thing in the world; but as I can have no pleasure without you, it is quite necessary for me to know when you can be one of us."

Though this was not a proposal, Emily fore-

saw a very agreeable day, and she brightened considerably, while, with the aid of Mrs. Norris, she named the time about which the apothecary might consider it good for her, and pretty good for himself, that she shoud be emancipated from the sofa.

The point was arranged at last; and long after Mr. Harcourt left her, Emily was still building castles in the air on a new foundation derived from the expected day of pleasure.

Violet was now taken up in so many different ways that she had not so much leisure as formerly; and Emily being obliged to remain at home, they had not met very lately. Miss Norris wrote her a note, requesting her to come and see her that evening, if she could, with the intention of learning whether Violet Woodville had been invited earlier than herself to Lord Stanmore's Greenwich party. That she was, or would be invited was certain; for Emily had already heard of the open admiration Lord Stanmore professed for her beautiful friend; and she was also anxious to obtain some authentic information upon this subject.

It was very true that amongst the many who were struck with the uncommon loveliness of our heroine, there was one very young man, of a

somewhat peculiar character, undeveloped, but perhaps not the less pleasing.

Lord Stanmore was among the first to make acquaintance with the new opera-dancer; but he was surprised and annoyed when he found how difficult it would be for him to obtain her affections—that is, her affections as he meant to obtain them; and he soon perceived that, if seducing her was not hopeless, it could only be by means of winning her attachment, and by the bad principles he could not but suspect were only dormant in her bosom. "I can win her hardly by her vanity," thought he, "and still less by her avarice, for she has none."

Slowly her admirer became impressed with the virtue of Violet Woodville's character, and her good conduct was undoubted.

Lord Stanmore was now really unhappy: he could not think of marrying her, yet he was very much in love. He was twenty-two, and his own master. He would not fly from the object of his passion; there was always a latent trust in his breast, that example and great temptation might prove foes to Violet, and friends to him. He was encouraged also by thinking that he had made some impression on a heart as yet untried—he at least hoped so.

It was certain that Violet was flattered by the respectful preference of her admirer—doubly respectful Lord Stanmore made it appear, because he was well aware that it was the most profound, as well as the most delicate flattery he could offer to one in her situation.

Her parents, and even M. Dupas, already dreamt of her as the bride of the rich young peer. Violet dreamt no such dream; but she did not the less encourage, after a gentle fashion, Lord Stanmore's admiration. He was good-looking, and a charming person—besides, he was her first love.

He speedily made acquaintance with all the prima donnas and ballerinas, through whose means he found he could share the society of Violet. At concerts and practisings, at rehearsals, at suppers, and réunions after the ballet; at the house of one or other of the operatic corps, he found the opportunities he sought, and was most assiduous in availing himself of them. It was always something to be making love, and even if nothing more came of it, he felt a sort of malicious pleasure in the hope that he might make himself regretted.

It was chiefly for the sake of Violet Woodville that Lord Stanmore proposed the Greenwich

water-party; and he gave her *carte blanche* to ask all her friends, whilst he invited a number of men to add to their number. They were all to meet at Whitehall, and go down to Greenwich by water. Violet was naturally delighted at the pleasant day she expected to pass, and much pleased also by the manner in which Lord Stanmore made her the queen of the fête.

Violet Woodville went to see Emily as she requested, and gladly availed herself of her permission to ask her friends, by hoping Emily and her mother would be among them.

"O, I did not know, Violet, that this party was all for you! Mr. Harcourt has asked me already," said Emily, a little piqued at finding she was not the first personage on this occasion. "But tell me, is it true that Lord Stanmore is very much in love? How do you manage him, Violet?— do you think he is at all a sort of man to marry you? Has he any mother, or any tiresome old guardian to meddle with what they have no business?"

"I do not know," answered Violet, colouring; "but as for marrying me, I am not so ambitious; Lord Stanmore's relations would hate me, if he did marry me, and I could not bear to be despised by any one."

"What great nonsense is that you are talking,

child! why I could fancy you were come out of a wood all at once."

"Oh, you know, Emily, people look upon things differently. After all, it would be very wrong for a person like Lord Stanmore to marry me, who am not his equal in any way."

Miss Norris burst into a loud laugh.

"Heaven help your understanding! If I did not know you better, I should think you were the greatest fool alive. Who has put these crotchets into your head?"

"Not a being, believe me, but we may all make our own reflections."

"You had better make no more such as these; in our condition of life that sort of thing will not do at all. I never heard Lord Stanmore was a saint,—is it to please him you have learnt so much wisdom?"

"Come, don't laugh too much at me, Emily. You know there is truth in what I have said, at all events."

"I dare say; you may tell me as much of the Proverbs of King Solomon, but I am not going to quote them, for all that. Well, I will talk no more nonsense,—but tell me, what do you hear about me and Harcourt?—what is said about it.

do you hear?—and is it thought he will propose for me?"

"Indeed, Emily, people are very ill-natured in what they say of you sometimes, and I wish Mr. Harcourt would propose to you, as you desire it so much, and then nothing more could be said."

"What do they say of me? I suppose it is that little spiteful Céleste, who never has forgiven me for taking Harcourt away from her; what does she say of me, Violet?"

"Oh, it is not little Céleste only, but other people; they declare he never will marry you, and that you must know it."

"Well, I think differently,—and if Mr. Harcourt does propose, I own I shall glory in it, on account of that impertinent Céleste. She is so jealous, there is nothing she will not say of me. Pray, dear Violet, is she asked to be of the party to Greenwich?"

"I fear so, but you need not care for that."

"Oh dear no, I shall so like it! Harcourt will treat her with the utmost contempt, and, after her behaviour to me, I shall certainly not be sorry for her mortification. And then, Violet, if I do marry Mr. Harcourt," continued Emily in exuberant gaiety,—"how I shall like to have

you constantly with me, and what amusement we shall have! You will always be my best friend, and Mr. Harcourt likes you already, and I am sure he will be so kind afterwards; and then he is the most generous person I know, and will give me every thing in the world I desire. How curious it will be for us to go to the opera together in our own box, will it not? And there I shall see Céleste all that way off,—ha, ha, ha!—dancing as she always does, with one foot more turned in than the other, and seeing me where she cannot get at me with all her ill-nature—how nice it will be for us to go in that way together!"

"Dearest Emily, you are very kind to think of me so; I do wish it was all settled with Mr. Harcourt; but you have never told me if you have heard any more of M. Larray; I am afraid he thought you behaved unkindly to him."

Emily Norris made no reply, but her expression changed.

"He is gone to Paris, is he not?"

"Do not name him now," exclaimed Emily, bursting into a violent fit of tears, and evincing grief as violent as her gaiety had been the very instant previous: and leaning on the table, she hid her face with her hands.

"Good heavens! do you care so much for him?" said Violet Woodville in astonishment.

"Indeed I do,—he is the only person in the whole world I ever really preferred,—and—perhaps I shall never see him again."

"Then why, Emily, have you behaved to him in the way you have? you knew him to be devoted to you."

"Ah! if I could recall the past it should all be different. I thought if I could only marry Mr. Harcourt, that was every thing, and that I should be a lady, and then that odious Céleste could affront me no more. I was not always in the same mind. There were times that I would sooner have been Henri's wife than the King of England's; but then we quarrelled, and he was jealous; and mamma too, the moment she thought it possible Mr. Harcourt would marry me, never talked of any thing else; and of Henri being poor, and of how rich I should be, and that was the great thing. And I could not help liking to flirt with Mr. Harcourt, because of that French girl, who has always been interfering with me all my life; and then I quarrelled dreadfully with M. Larray, because he said he heard that Mr. Harcourt would not marry me, and that

I should lose my character, and he threatened to give me up for ever if I would not promise not to see Mr. Harcourt any more; and I was very angry, and declared that all should be at an end then with Henri, for, that since he said this, I would not ever marry him, and that I would not be governed by any body.

"I was certainly very angry. I think I told Henri I wondered how he could expect that I should not prefer Mr. Harcourt to him, and that I had a right to do as well for myself as I could.—I do not know how it was, he was in a passion with me at first, but at last he softened entirely; and, when I least thought of his doing so, he held out his hand and took mine, and said, "Let us part friends,—dear Emily, may God bless you!—I have loved you very much—I will not ask you ever to think of me again, but, for your own sake, have prudence;"—and before I had time to answer, he left me, and next day went to Paris.

"This was the first idea I had of his leaving England, except on that one evening at our house when he bade me a sort of farewell through you; but we had been friends after that, and I never thought he was serious in meaning to go abroad.

"So now it is all over, and I shall never"—— Tears choked her utterance, and Emily gave way to a burst of grief she never reckoned upon undergoing, or her own selfishness would have saved her from the infliction.

CHAPTER IV.

"Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
As proudly sailing o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth at the prow, and Pleasure at the helm."

"MAMMA, it is such a lovely day!" exclaimed Violet Woodville, her face radiant with pleasure: "how delightful!—nothing could be more perfect!"

It was the day fixed for the water-party to Greenwich; exquisite in truth it was,—just one of those days which we *can* have, even in this country,—just such a day as it is worth while to exist in, and to possess no other blessing.

Should the reader be capable of appreciating the actual charm there is in a very fine day, he will understand the force of Violet Woodville's exclamation of "How delightful!" and when, added to the weather, we can combine the gayest spirits and the most smiling joy of a young mind,—confess with me, my reader, say what we may,

there are some heavenly hours in this world of ours, and that sometimes it *is* worth while to have been born, and to have incurred the chance of all the weal or woe that may fall to the lot of man.

It was about one o'clock; the Woodvilles were ready to set forth. It had been agreed that the whole party should meet at Whitehall-stairs, and proceed thence in boats to Greenwich; the Woodvilles and the Norrises were going together. At this moment a note was brought to Mr. Woodville, from Lord Stanmore.

"This is most provoking," said he, handing the note to Mrs. Woodville. "Indeed it is," replied that lady, with an expression of consternation. "Indeed it is; so Violet's new, beautiful pink hat goes for nothing, and she might as well not have had a new one!"

"Nay, indeed, that I don't see at all; little Violet ought to have all the hats in the kingdom, such a good, pretty little daughter as she is to me;" and the fond father kissed his child with proud affection.

"Oh, I did not mean that Violet should not have as many new bonnets as she wants, only that beautiful pink one she does look so well in, and it cost a great deal; but as I knew she was

to see Lord Stanmore, on that account I would make her have it, wasn't it, Violet?"

"Dear father, all this time you have not told me what the note contains; never mind my bonnet, mamma, but tell me that."

The note certainly communicated disagreeable intelligence. It was from Lord Stanmore, to say he had that instant received a bad account of his mother's health; she had sent for two physicians, and he was led to fear there was danger. He was, consequently, instantly going down to Brighton, where Lady Stanmore was staying. He desired, however, that the party might proceed without him. All the arrangements were made for it, and he had requested a friend to take his place on the occasion. Lord Stanmore's note concluded with expressing great regret at losing so much pleasure as he had anticipated in sharing the society of the Woodvilles, and sorrow for the cause of his deprivation.

Violet looked rather blank on finishing this note. A great part of her happiness vanished. She went to the window and began to think the day was not so fine as before. She mused for some minutes, and then, turning round, inquired in an absent manner what was to be done now about going.

"Oh, we go, of course, all the same," replied Mrs. Woodville, who very much liked what she called a pleasure party; "don't you see Lord Stanmore, in a very thoughtful manner, particularly requests that we should upon no account give up going, stating that he has got a friend to take his place. What's his name, Mr. Woodville? Does Lord Stanmore mention the name of the friend who is to preside in his place today? Give me the note. No—a friend,—no, there's no name,—that's a pity. I wonder Lord Stanmore did not mention his friend's name,—it's always as well to know who's who."

"You are sure he is a gentleman, can't that content you, Mrs. Woodville? What does it signify what his name is?" said Mr. Woodville.

"Oh, of course I suppose he is a gentleman, but still it is as well to know what people are besides."

"Well, for my part, I don't see what more there is to know besides."

"No, you never do know what you ought. Well, here's the glass coach. I suppose you gave a guinea for it for the day as usual, Charles, eh? It is a very neat one, I declare,—just as good as if we had our own carriage."

"Yes, I desired to have a nice one this time. Now get in, or we shall be too late; you know we are to call for the Norrises."

When the Woodvilles and the Norrises reached Whitehall Yard they were late, at least it appeared so from the previous arrival of two other vehicles, one being green, the other a deep yellow.

Out of the windows of these several equipages protruded some fair faces, but I do not know whether the eminently Parisian hats that waved on the top of these faces were not, in some instances, fairer still.

Impatience was strongly exhibited on the most coquettish countenance; and two or three cabs were waiting in the court, while their owners, in the very whitest gloves, were alternately walking about, admiring the French polish on their own boots, or stopping to pacify the anxious sylphs of the glass coaches.

The Woodville party was clearly the cause of all this restlessness, and their arrival was hailed accordingly. Then began the letting down of steps, and the gentlemen's little cab boys touching their hats, and endeavouring to get noticed and obtain their orders, so as not to have to wait all day, and perhaps all night too, in Whitehall

Yard for their masters, by whom their wretched little existences, and that of their poor cab horses, were being equally forgotten.

Then there was the shawling of the ladies. They were all of them good-looking, or approaching to it, which some women contrive to make about the same thing.

One there was smarter, and still more *aux petits soins* with herself than the rest of her companions. She was really pretty, and had taken every care to make the most of that advantage.

"*Mon cachemire—mille pardons,—mais c'est égale, Milor,—ne vous dérangez pas, Milor,—mais ç'a fait, je vous assure,*"—and, on this assurance, the *Milor*, of course, redoubled his attention towards draping the folds of an exquisite *cachemire des Indes* on the shoulders of the lady in question.

"There's Céleste," whispered Emily Norris to Violet, as she availed herself of Mr. Harcourt's assistance to walk down to the stairs.

"*Ah, mais voilà ma chère* Miss Norris,—*mais quelle jolie robe qu'elle porte! Il faut absolument que je lui parle un tout petit mot,*" cried the owner of the cachemire, as she advanced towards Emily, leaning on the arm of her *Milor*.

"*Chère* Miss Norris, I must tell you, you are

charming to-day. I have to *féliciter* you, have I not? Congratulate you call it. And you, too, Mr. Harcourt. Well, you will live very happily together, I do not but believe you will. *Drôle de chose que le mariage! c'est une liaison pour la vie! mais tous les deux vous êtes faites pour cela, n'est-ce pas? et quand est-ce que ce sera, ma très chère?*"

The last words were conveyed in a loud whisper. Emily Norris endeavoured to look as if she did not understand; and, with as much coolness as she could assume, she replied:—"I do not know to what you allude, Madlle. Céleste, but I am so sorry for the ungrateful reception you met with in the ballet on Saturday. Every body has told me of it, and I cannot tell you how it distressed me for your sake."

"*Eh, mais ne vous donnez pas cette peine, mon ange de bonté. Mais c'est que j'ai fait mal exprès pour m'excuser de ce rôle qui m'ennuii à la mort! Mais dites donc,—vous me prierez à vos nóces, j'espère? Ah, voilà Milor qui m'attend toujours; au revoir, cher enfant;*" and the malicious Céleste skipped off, happily conscious of having said the most disagreeable things she could, if not to Emily, at least, to her lover, who was out of tem-

per accordingly, for Mr. Harcourt never could bear to be annoyed,—it is very disagreeable.

Violet was upon her father's arm, still a little distressed at the unavoidable defection of Lord Stanmore.

Laughing and talking, the whole party reached the boats. In these, two or three gentlemen were already occupied in preparing for the reception of the ladies, and one of them now jumped forward, and said something to Mr. Harcourt about introducing him. Mr. Harcourt obeyed by presenting this gentleman to Mr. Woodville and his daughter, and in him Violet at once recognised Mr. d'Arcy, whom she had never beheld since the night when she met him at Mrs. Norris's.

The impression he had then produced had almost worn away.

Mr. d'Arcy said he was desired to fulfill all the duties of his absent friend, Lord Stanmore, on this occasion, and asked, with an air of deference, to conduct Miss Woodville to the boat.

As he spoke, D'Arcy gazed in admiration on the most beautiful face he thought he had ever beheld.

At length everything was arranged, and Mr. Woodville, and Violet, Emily Norris, and Mr.

Harcourt (who was still writhing under the infliction of Madlle. Céleste), that young lady, herself and her *Milor,* were all stowed in the first boat, but ere it shoved off D'Arcy discovered that there was no remaining place for him.

"D'Arcy," exclaimed Lord William C——, "what are you looking at? There's plenty of room for you in the other boats."

"So I see, but this is the one I mean to go in; who will move?

"Why you don't think we shall?"

"Indeed I do, my dear William,—one of you must. I am particularly desired to see that Miss Woodville is taken care of, and I cannot think of going in one of the other boats when she is in this," and, stepping forwards, Mr. d'Arcy whispered something in Lord William's ear which had the effect of making him propose to his companion, *i. e.* to Céleste, to find places elsewhere.

Now, Madlle. Céleste had already practised some manœuvring to be where she was, and to be ousted thus she thought unbearable, and this opinion she expressed to Lord William.

"Madlle. does not like moving, D'Arcy; she made a point of being in this boat;" and he added, confidentially, "see if you can get her out yourself, it's all one to me, but I mustn't affront

her, because I am making love to her, and I have so many affairs just now on hand, I can't afford losing time to make it up if I quarrel with her."

With an air of soft benignity D'Arcy proffered his hand to Céleste, and, on obtaining hers, gave it a most hardy gripe, which acted the part of a lever to the Frenchwoman, whether she would or not; but he accompanied the action with a smile and a look he meant for her alone, and one that he would sooner have resigned all chance of the place he aimed at possessing than Violet Woodville should have noticed. It thoroughly overcame poor Céleste, who went away with a better grace than she threatened to do at first.

To make one more, instead of the two who were gone, a Madame N—— was ushered into the vacant place, who, not having a cavalier, said she did not want one, and was taken at her word.

D'Arcy was quickly by the side of Violet; and at the same instant a waterman called out to Mr. Woodville, to leave his daughter, in order to trim the boat by sitting on the opposite side.

D'Arcy, in an easy manner, lamented Lord Stanmore's absence, and did not scruple to ex-

press the reason, which would, he said, make the deprivation be doubly felt by his friend.

Violet replied with embarrassment. The conversation turned on other subjects: she found Mr. d'Arcy an easier person to converse with than she expected, and in spite of the timidity which she involuntarily felt, whenever the recollection of his conversation with Mr. Harcourt crossed her mind, still his agreeableness won upon her.

His manner, too, she found different from what she had considered it on that occasion. There was none of the superciliousness she had disliked; and when by accident she saw his expression. Violet only beheld the most speaking countenance, and not a feature, as she thought, that was not lighted with philanthropic benevolence.

Violet Woodville was fairly puzzled; she wondered how she could ever have thought ill-naturedly of him.

"Do you know, Miss Woodville," said D'Arcy, "I saw you at the Opera, for the first time, on Tuesday. I am only just returned to town. I have a great deal to thank you for; I never knew in my life, before, how exquisite an enjoyment it is to admire with such intensity!"

"I am very glad to hear the ballet pleased

you;—indeed, I think the scenery is beautiful," answered Violet with shyness.

"Oh, I am not thinking of the scenery," and D'Arcy smiled archly in her face. "I do not remember it even, I only thought of seeing my beau ideal of a Venus so unexpectedly embodied, as I saw it then,—as I see it now! But you are tired of hearing you are handsome, and, young as you are, you find the theme is hackneyed. Do not hate me if I could not fail to worship, and to tell you so, as all those that ever beheld you fain would."

"No, Mr. d'Arcy, I am not so used to compliments as all that," said Violet, *naïvement;* "but only I like people not to exaggerate so much to me, because I think they must suppose how vain I am, and that, you know, is not flattering at all."

"Flattery," muttered D'Arcy, half to himself, "no one ever flattered you."

"Are you fond of the Opera, Mr. d'Arcy?"

"Yes, very; I like it because, in the first place. I am really fond of music: and, whether or no, I frequent it on principle."

"But why on principle?"

"We become so vile and hardened occasionally, I think it is an immense thing to get one's old

romance brushed up—revived a little at intervals, and nothing does that so effectually as a good opera. These touchings up do the basest hearts an infinite good. Ah! I suppose I talk nonsense to you, who can know nothing of the world,—may you long remain blest with ignorance: you ought, for, if I ever read a countenance, yours is the picture of a charming mind. I could look at you for ever, and I could not imagine you possessed one fault! Tell me, have you one in the world?"

"Oh, yes," answered Violet, laughing, "so many; but I shall not tell them."

"Well, I think you would if I were to press you very much."

"What makes you think so?"

"You have an air of candour that bids defiance to concealment of any kind."

"Altogether, you have a better opinion of me than I deserve; I am not in the least better than other people, I assure you."

"For instance," said D'Arcy, "not better than any one of us in this boat? I confess," he continued, "I am curious to comprehend this standard of your own perfection. To begin with that formal Madame N——, who has been the Emilia, pocket-handkerchief woman in *Otello* for the last three seasons, to the best of my recollection,—an

excellent woman, for what I know, but would you exchange all the good you are sure of in yourself, for the qualities you may suppose her to possess?"

"No, no!"

"Well, there's Miss—Miss Norris, what do you think of her?" D'Arcy spoke with an enquiring eye. Violet reddened, for she was reminded of the scarcely less than contempt with which she had before heard D'Arcy speak of Emily Norris.

"Miss Norris is a great friend of mine," she answered, almost deprecatingly.

"Ah!" exclaimed D'Arcy. Violet raised her eyes to his. They were fixed upon her with earnest penetration, while a smile played round the corners of a very handsome mouth. Then those eyes, as they encountered Violet Woodville's, softened; and timidly Violet turned her head away. But, in her heart, she felt pleased; and the soft voice, in which it was necessary D'Arcy's remarks should be made, was not without its effect on her susceptibility, whilst it prevented their being heard by their companions.

D'Arcy had very handsome eyes, and the most expressive I ever saw; they were not continually handsome, but they had some latent charm: it

existed, but was not always evident; and at times it slept entirely beneath that look of utter indifference which had been so much remarked by Violet when she first met him.

"There's Mr. Woodville, but we will pass him over: he is your father, and that at once endears him in my mind."

"Oh, yes; if you knew my father, he is better than anybody in the world; I wish I was but half as good as he is."

"I believe you.—Now for Mr. Harcourt: what say you for his excellencies of character?"

"I see him almost for the first time."

"Then there remains only myself to discuss. Would you, at a venture, exchange all the good feelings you must be conscious of for mine?"

"But, again—I know you so little, Mr. d'Arcy, yet I dare say you are a very good person."

The innocent gentleness with which this was spoken would have touched a tiger's heart: D'Arcy did not smile; he could not.

"D'Arcy," exclaimed Mr. Harcourt, who found he had exhausted his sentimentalities with Emily: "D'Arcy, did you ever see a girl like that little Céleste? By Jove! what could she want here?"

"The pleasure of sitting opposite Miss Norris

and yourself, I presume; undeniably no small pleasure," said D'Arcy, bowing to Emily.

But the manner was changed. In those few words Violet could hardly recognise the person she had just conversed with. His look, too! It was that look and that tone that Violet could not bear.

"Is Madlle. Céleste a friend of yours, Miss Woodville?" asked Mr. Harcourt.

"No; I hardly know her."

"No!" said Woodville: "I am not very fond of Madlle. Céleste, and I like to choose nice friends for my good little daughter there. You must excuse my being very fond of her. She is my only child, and the best that ever lived, I am sure. But I have no business to be saying so here; I do not know what made me so silly," continued the father, half modestly, half ashamed of his parental pride. D'Arcy looked at Woodville's honest countenance, and he wondered inwardly.

Before dinner the whole party went sight-seeing, as is usual, I believe. D'Arcy took care not to relinquish the charge of Violet, and she was too happy to wish for any change. So off they all went to see the Hospital, as most of the party had done a hundred times before; but

which was no reason for their not doing it again now.

Many a joyous party has trod the courts of Greenwich Hospital—many; and if those old stones could speak, what tales of love they could reveal! Vows spoken there, and long forgotten. There, too, many a tear has fallen, and many a ringing laugh has sounded; and oblivion, and the dust of the dead are all that remain of eventful hours—the joy or the misery of a human life! But of these things there is no record; for the heart has none.

> E'en such is time, which takes in trust
> Our youth, our joys, and all we have,
> And pays us nought save age and dust;
> Which, in the dark and silent grave,
> When we have wandered all our ways,
> Shuts up the story of our days.
>
> Sir W. Raleigh.

Before Emily quitted Mr. Harcourt's arm, on arriving at the "Ship," where they were to dine. Mrs. Norris approached, and said to Emily, in a sort of genteel voice, which she used on particular occasions—"Dearest, I fear I spoilt half your happiness to day, by not being able to be with you on the water. Emily cannot bear to be chaperoned by anybody but myself, Mr. Harcourt: she is quite childish about that. But you saw,

love, there really was no room for me; and the Woodvilles are such good people, and they were in the boat!"

"Oh, thank you, Mamma; I did regret your not being with me; but I knew you could not help it," answered Miss Norris.

"Mamma," said Emily, while adjusting her hair before dinner, "Mamma, I beg you will get anywhere but near me at dinner—above all, do not sit opposite to me. It is very easy for you, if you try, to get a seat a long way from me down the table, on the same side—only a long way from me, mind that!"

"Very well," said Mrs. Norris, "and pray don't let your temper get the better of you, so as to have any of your snapping at Madlle. Céleste. She will do you harm yet if you are not careful; for my part I shall be particularly civil to her."

"Harcourt," said D'Arcy, the first opportunity he found, "what is this new girl?"

"What—which?"

"That little Woodville, to be sure!"

"Miss Woodville?"

"Oh, how punctilious you are become! Upon my word, Harcourt, the society you keep im-

proves you amazingly. Miss Woodville, then," continued D'Arcy, with an emphasis on the *Miss*.

"Why, she is a very nice girl, I believe, and it is no use your looking after her."

"Indeed! *en attendant,* I shall like to know something of her."

"Well, I tell you, she is a very nice person."

"Be more explicit, pray: how do you know anything about her?"

"She happens to be a particular friend of Miss Emily Norris, and gets advice from her; and Emily possesses such high principles, that I have an opinion of anybody who is her friend," said Mr. Harcourt, slowly and pompously.

"The devil you have!" exclaimed D'Arcy, bursting into laughter; "well, I don't despair, notwithstanding. Thank you, you have told me a great deal."

The dinner was excellent, and gaiety was the order of the day. The champagne was declared to be the best ever tasted, and, on that account, it was tasted very often. All the ladies were in good humour. *Milor* and Céleste became great friends, and he hoped he should not have to waste as much time in making love to the lady as he at first feared.

Emily and Mr. Harcourt went on remarkably well, for two people who, after all, were playing at cross purposes.

Mrs. Norris with her lynx eyes saw them, and everybody else, though she obeyed Emily's injunction, and did not sit too near her. Mrs. Norris was one of those who particularly approved of the champagne, and thought it almost as good as any lover, and wondered she had not thought so all her life. So she drank it; and went on looking benignly at all the world, but keeping herself as decorous as she possibly could, so as not to be a reproach to the rest; for Mrs. Norris was quite of opinion with the man in 'Molière's Misanthrope:'—

> "A force de sagesse, on peut être blâmable,
> La parfaite raison fait tout extremité,
> Et veut que l'on soit sage avec sobriété.
> * * * * *
> En c'est une folie à nulle autre seconde,
> De vouloir se meler à corriger le monde."

After dinner D'Arcy was extremely civil to Mr. Woodville, and talked a great deal about the orchestra at the King's Theatre; and blamed the manager much for being stingy. He then praised Violet exceedingly, and, with great frankness, extolled her dancing, and told Woodville numerous things that he (D'Arcy) had heard in eulogium upon her.

In the evening, walking in the park was proposed, and acceded to by all.

D'Arcy found a moment to express his anxiety about Mrs. Woodville's shawl being the right one, and to beg she would allow him to introduce a cousin of his, Lord Toppington, who was among their number; and he brought up a raw boy of sixteen, and presented him, saying, "The young gentleman was most anxious for the honour of making Mrs. Woodville's acquaintance." He next whispered in his ear—"There, Arthur, that's a great thing I have done for you, you may be much obliged to me,—offer your arm directly, and don't stand staring like a fool."

Then D'Arcy glided back to Violet, who was attending to some young men, and, at the same time, forced to listen to the honied words of little Céleste, who was fond of new acquaintances, and liked teaching "the young idea how to shoot." She was rather a clever gipsy, that Mademoiselle Céleste.

A walk by moonlight is a very pleasant thing with a lover, and a lover, too, just beginning to bud into one. A budding lover is a much pleasanter thing than a full-blown one, very often; there is so much trouble attendant upon the latter sort.

D'Arcy said nothing positive to Miss Woodville about his being in love with her; he was as discreet on that head as Mrs. Norris herself could have desired, and Violet grew more and more pleased with him. He pointed out the moon and the stars to her, but in a new way, it seemed to Violet; so that it was really the same thing to her as if she had never seen them before.

It may be worth remarking, that Violet and D'Arcy, out of some twenty people who composed the party, were the only ones who made an observation on the beauties of Nature. Céleste and *Milor* thought of nothing of the sort; and if Céleste had shown a disposition that way, Lord William never could have found time to reply to such a singular little *caprice d'esprit.*

Emily and Mr. Harcourt sauntered on together. The latter was not *aimable.* He declared he could not understand Miss Norris's behaviour: her unkindness was extraordinary. Was he not devoted to her?—had she a desire it was not his to fulfil? Was he not her slave? Had she ever had reason to doubt his affection? Had he not forsaken every other lady for her sake?—and yet, what was the return he met with? He could no longer doubt Miss Norris had de-

ceived him; her affections were already engaged; he was but the victim of her coquetry, and was the most miserable of men!

That last assurance, as a lover, he was, of course, bound to add, whether it were true or not. All these sentences sounded very euphoniously; but what of that—for not one of them hinted at a proposal—and Emily still thought that might be obtained, finally;—if not—why——then——but Mrs. Norris was so discreet a woman, that it is not fair to surmise on the future actions of any one under her guidance.

As for Mrs. Woodville, and her boy Toppington, they trotted on together; she, poor woman, trying to make such innocent conversation as appeared the best suited to him, as she conceived; and he, more shy than he ever was in his life before, and a thousand times more in awe of a lady who acted at Covent Garden, than even of his stiff great grandmother, the Duchess of Mightiness, when she sent to give him a lecture, or to stop his allowance. He thought it, however, very kind of his cousin D'Arcy to have got him to this water party, and still more kind to have introduced him to so distinguished a person as Mrs. Woodville.

"Remarkably pleasing young man, Mr. d'Arcy,

I think; did not you, Mr. Woodville?" inquired Woodville's spouse, as they reached home in the glass coach.

"Yes, indeed; and he was very attentive to all of us, I thought; and he told me also that he admired Violet so very much, which showed him to be a sort of frank young man, without any double dealing about him, which is what I hate. I do not like it when young men come and talk to a girl, and are not for saying anything of it to her parents: I, who know the world well, always guess that means no good;" and upon the close of these pertinent observations, Mr. Woodville stepped upon his own threshold.

The next time Violet saw Mr. d'Arcy was while he was sitting in a side-box at the Opera; before she became aware of his presence, she thought only of the audience. *Now* he alone was that audience. The judgment of the multitude, pending upon herself at that moment, was forgotten—contending feelings were hers. She hated so that D'Arcy, the despiser D'Arcy, should behold her one of the tribe for whom he had declared so much contempt. I at least will show him I deserve not his ill opinion, thought Violet; "Still I am an opera-dancer," she involuntarily exclaimed; and never, since its commencement,

had Violet Woodville's dislike to her profession so forcibly recurred to her.

Two or three days afterwards D'Arcy called upon the Woodvilles: he had heard, he said, from Lord Stanmore. Lady Stanmore was not better, and his friend wrote in wretched spirits. He was exceedingly attached to his mother, and Mr. d'Arcy declared, from the account he received, he thought it a hopeless case; and he grieved over Lord Stanmore's affliction in consequence.

Violet was in the room during D'Arcy's visit, and she could not help feeling that his eyes were riveted upon her, when he mentioned Lord Stanmore. She was really sorry for her admirer's distress, and she said so without disguising it.

D'Arcy talked more of Lord Stanmore to her father and mother than he did to herself. During his visit M. Dupas came in; and while the family greetings were going on, D'Arcy contrived to approach Violet.

"Do you never walk, Miss Woodville?"

"Oh, yes; very often."

"When?"

"Very early; before breakfast, often."

"Where?"

"In Kensington Gardens: we live so near; it is convenient."

"With Mrs. Woodville?"

"No; Mamma is not up so early."

D'Arcy longed to ask,—Alone, then? or With whom? but he did not quite dare; for he was aware that the drift of his questions was unperceived by Violet, and he feared that, had it been otherwise, he might give umbrage. Violet actually did not surmise the course of his inquiries. It is possible, without being a fool, to be quite unknowing in the ways of the world; and Violet was the most unsuspecting of human beings. Her simplicity of mind, as to all that was artful or designing, placed her almost in the position of a child who learns to read, but, from hating the pursuit, gains no improvement. Violet Woodville daily heard, and sometimes saw, instances of deception, and even of vice; but while she knew such things were, she did not dream of them in connexion with herself.

There are minds like this, beautiful only as they were created; and how sad it is to think that soon the contact of other minds shall tarnish the purity of such as these, and reduce them to their own level. Yet are we all alike destined for an ordeal; and if virtue falls into error, we

are bound to doubt its true perfection. It was not made to pass as useless; and it has been said by one* who was well read in the hearts of his fellow-creatures,—" La même faiblesse qui nous fait trouver des écueils au milieu du monde et de la cour, nous auroit fait une tentation de la retraite même. Nous portons partout avec nous la source de nos crimes et de nos malheurs, et ainsi il ne faut pas attendre nôtre sureté des dehors de la situation."

* Massillon.

CHAPTER V.

"The game of life—how is it played—by whom—
For what?—What fearful trickery
To gain some wretched end: and, still more sad,
How much of mental power, which ought to boast
A nobler aim, employed for means the basest!
'Tis brave to see two knaves engaged, each bent
On duping his opponent; but, alas!
There are some nobler victims, some whose fate
Might wring hot tears of blood from human hearts."

OLD PLAY.

"CHARLES," said Mrs. Woodville to her husband, "I cannot help thinking Lord Stanmore gets Mr. d'Arcy to call here, that he may see us for him, as it were: you know that is so like a man in love. I fancy, too, somehow, Mr. d'Arcy knows we have guessed that; for he is quite at his ease, and comes in to us in a way as if he thought we could only be glad to see him."

"And so we are," replied Mr. Woodville; "but I would rather see Lord Stanmore himself. I hope Violet is not thinking too much of him, poor little girl! These fine gentlemen may go on for

awhile; but if anything comes to turn their attention, there's an end of them. Who knows what fine lady he may fall in love with any day, at all those balls and places that we have nothing to do with? Don't talk about him to little Violet, for fear she should get to think more of him than it is well she should."

"Not I! Really, Mr. Woodville, one would think sometimes you took me for a fool! I have not heard Violet name Lord Stanmore these three days!"

"I am sure he *was* in love with her, however; and he knew well enough, from what he saw of me, I was not the sort of person to let my daughter do anything that she should not do; and, with the education we have given her, I would have him to know she's fit to be the wife of any Lord. If he only knew the money we spent upon her! Perhaps he thinks she can only dance?"

"I do not know what he thinks; but I should like to have done with him, one way or other: there's a swarm of those young men every night after the poor girl, all making up their mind she will come to their turn. If it was not for our always looking after her, I do not know what they would not be saying to her."

"Oh," rejoined Mrs. Woodville, "I take care of that, or else M. Dupas does. I do wonder when we shall see Lord Stanmore, for the season will be over in three weeks, and, if his mother should die, why then he will go into black, and will not be going about for some time. Parents' mourning, though, is not worn so long as it used to be, is it, Charles?"

"I don't know,—but I don't see what difference it makes to us."

"Ah, well, I do though. There's a ring,—see, is it the Norrises?—no, it's Dupas,—no, it's Mr. d'Arcy."

Mr. d'Arcy had certainly familiarized the Woodvilles with his visits, without their ever having the appearance of being abrupt or uncalled for. During these visits he saw Violet, but not always. When he did not he never asked for her, but he stayed less time when she was not there. He was fond of music, and understood it, and sometimes he got Mr. Woodville to play to him upon the violoncello. Very often he brought new music with him, and he had always something to say about Lord Stanmore.

Violet was never engaged in the ballet, that she did not see D'Arcy in the box nearest to her; and there was no one whose applause was

more frequent, or more loudly expressed. By degrees she got accustomed to seeing him always at the Opera. She liked him more each time she met him, because each time she found something of her original misgiving about him diminished. She soon beheld only the pleasing side of his character.

Violet now seldom thought of Lord Stanmore: she had liked him, but D'Arcy interested her. Ah! what a difference there is in the meaning of those two words! Interest another in your favour, be it man or woman, and much may follow,—to please merely is to do nothing. And is it not true that there are some people who please, but who cannot interest? There is a wide distinction between pleasing exceedingly, and interesting exceedingly,—either may happen, and neither in connexion.

About three weeks had elapsed since the Greenwich water-party, and one or two more of the same sort took place. D'Arcy made love, but not openly. He still left Violet in doubt. As yet he had not done anything decidedly declaring his sentiments, but he ascertained that he had no rival, and that was what he most desired. "Les impressions sont d'autant plus dangereuses qu'elles sont insensibles." Few of us

pause to analyse our feelings, and Violet was not one of those few. Our feelings are born, they grow, they inspire us vitally, and then, and not before, we wake to a knowledge of them. After all, though a great deal may be said about knowing ourselves intimately, and of the utility of such knowledge, I doubt if there be really any advantage in it.

The commencement, too, of all sentiments of love or friendship is so soothing. Distrust is disarmed, suspicion has its opiate; and, if these first moments of illusion are to be destroyed, say ye, who can, what remains in lieu of them? and of what avail is all the reasoning of philosophy if it deprive us of one little iota of human happiness?

D'Arcy had not yet endeavoured to profit by the chance which he had discovered for himself, of meeting Violet in her morning walks. He had his reasons for this delay. He thought that Violet would conceive that she did not know him enough, not to be more surprised than he desired she should be at the interruption.

He had ascertained that a housekeeper, or old servant of the Woodvilles, was her duenna in these walks. The Woodvilles lived near Kensington, and Violet, who was not a strong person, was advised to get the morning air in the gar-

dens, and it suited particularly the domestic arrangements that these walks should be taken early.

"Pray, D'Arcy," said Mr. Harcourt, one night at Crockford's, "what have you been at lately?"

"I have been very much occupied. But I put the same question to you. You look very ill."

"And so I am,—horridly ill. I am so worried,—I am miserable."

"That's a pity. '*Il n'y a pas de plus grande folie que d'être malheureux.*'* What's the matter?"

"I am in such a scrape with the Norrises,—Céleste has been blowing me to the devil. I had hysterics, and scenes, and faintings,—and I declare I don't know what to do."

"Cut, to be sure,—don't be a fool."

"Not if I thought Emily really liked me."

"Upon my soul, Harcourt, you are as weak as water," exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Ah, I don't believe you ever cared for a woman in your life," replied Harcourt, pettishly.

D'Arcy laughed out aloud.

"What! not for Mrs. O'Colly? and didn't I turn hair-dresser for the Italian girl? Didn't I ruin myself for Estelle? and didn't I go to Rome

* Du Deffand.

after a woman, who had been divorced, for the sake of two other men? Didn't I become a Methodist for the brewer's wife? and wouldn't I have sold myself to the Devil for——"

"Oh, I know you, D'Arcy. At all events, you don't understand my feelings."

"Well, but stay, I want to ask you,—a'n't you going to have a supper, or something of that kind, at the Norrises this week?"

"What do you ask for?"

"There's some one to be there I want to meet, and they haven't asked me,—it is a mistake, I suppose."

"I am not asked myself."

"Perhaps, then, you would like me to see if I can intercede with the lovely Emily for you; or is it that slippery crocodile, her mamma, who has turned you out of the house?"

"No, it's no use," said Mr. Harcourt, shaking his head despondingly.

"Harcourt," said D'Arcy, more seriously than D'Arcy often said anything, "as we are old friends, I should be half inclined to give you advice this time unasked for; but I will not, because I believe I should be doing the most useless thing I ever did in my life."

"Thank you, D'Arcy, I believe you are a good

fellow. I am going to throw a couple of mains," and Harcourt moved towards the hazard table, well pleased with the amenity with which he thought he had listened to D'Arcy's advice; for it did not occur to him that, though he guessed its nature, that, nevertheless, he had not heard it.

Of his own accord D'Arcy went the next day to call on the Norrises. He found Mrs. Norris and Emily, but the latter was evidently failing in an attempted escape from the room as he entered it. Both mother and daughter looked discomfited. Mrs. Norris, however, soon recovered her usual placidity, and then said she was to have music the next evening, and hoped she should see Mr. d'Arcy, if he had nothing better to engage him.

This was all D'Arcy wanted, but he stayed a few minutes making conversation. Emily had hardly once spoken. D'Arcy talked of Harcourt, and said he was out of spirits; Emily still did not revive. At last D'Arcy observed there were tears in her eyes, tears, too, that she wished to conceal, and that she looked cross as well as unhappy, which made D'Arcy sure it was not feigned grief.

A touch of curiosity led him to observe her more closely. She thinks Harcourt is off. I sup-

pose, thought D'Arcy; and, perhaps, this sleek Jezabel, her mother, has been scolding her for it.

Mrs. Norris went on talking in her smooth, agreeable, proper way, and suddenly, as if she could no longer control her feelings, Emily moved to the window. D'Arcy then rose to go, but at that minute Madame N—— was announced, to whom, on her entrance, Mrs. Norris manifested great civility. Mrs. Norris had lately struck up an intimacy with Madame N——. She said she was delighted to cultivate so estimable a person as every body knew Madame to be. It was everybody knowing it, made Madame N—— so very estimable in Mrs. Norris's estimation.

During the greetings and seatings between the new comer and Mrs. Norris, D'Arcy approached the window, where Emily was still standing. She certainly looked very unhappy, and turned away, to hide her countenance from D'Arcy.

"Miss Norris," said D'Arcy softly, "is there any way in which I can serve you?"

Emily opened wide her tearful eyes. She had grown afraid of D'Arcy, and had guessed his covert dislike, though she never could feel sure

of it, because it was not easy to feel sure of anything about D'Arcy. If he sneered in one breath, he complimented her in the next; he never was *brusque;* he often was very civil. Emily had not made him out, but she was simply getting to dislike him for that very reason. D'Arcy's present question was uttered in a different tone from what she had ever heard D'Arcy speak with before; at first she hardly understood him. He added—"If I can, I shall be most happy."

An expression of intelligence now lighted Emily's face. Her mother's back was turned towards her at this moment,—Mrs. Norris was still intent on her new visitor. Emily glanced her eye at these two persons, then, with great haste, drew a letter from her bosom, and crushed it almost into D'Arcy's hand; he put it into his pocket, and then appeared to be only busy with his handkerchief.

"For Harcourt?" he said, inquiringly, and under-voiced.

"No, no,—not for him, you will see,—in the post,—you will see,—thank you for ever!"

D'Arcy thought he never saw Emily Norris look handsomer than she did at that moment,

when she cast a look of evident gratitude towards himself.

Just as Mrs. Norris's little blue, or little red, or little green page (I forget which) was shutting the door upon D'Arcy, and the latter was putting his hand upon Emily's letter, in order to examine the superscription, he was arrested by the sudden appearance of Lord William B——. His manner was eager, as he joined D'Arcy, hastily.

"Oh, I was just going to you, D'Arcy,—I wanted to find you," exclaimed Lord William, in a graver voice than usual.

"Very well, then we will walk on together."

"D'Arcy," continued Lord William, "I am in a scrape; I shall have to fight, and I want you to be my second."

"Of course, my dear fellow; but I am sorry to hear this,—what is it?"

"It's that cursed little Céleste who is at the bottom of it. She has been telling lies, and that, and her infernal coquetry have played the devil."

"Ah, I thought she looked mischievous; you should always examine the breed well before you have anything to do with these ladies. But how is it, William?"

"It seems, when I took to her, she belonged to

Spottington. I thought her free,—I never asked her,—how should such a thing come into my head? I thought she had a great deal of cash for one who was in the way of getting her living honestly; for I was fool enough to be taken in, and thought she cared for me, and believed her when she said she allowed no other man to make love to her; and I knew she floored Dick Wentworth. Well, one day who should I get a challenge from but Spottington, saying, he was only just returned to town, or he should have asked me sooner to give him satisfaction for my ungentlemanlike conduct. I thought the man was mad! I called at his house to try and see him,—he was out. Then I wrote to him, asking him to say, at least, what he meant. Presently Bubble arrived, to tell me that he was Spottington's friend, and that he was desired by him to inform me, that I must be aware my usurping Madlle. Céleste's affections, at a time she was under the positive protection of Spottington, was a piece of treachery that Spottington could not forgive. The truth is, the whole affair might have been explained, and I would have done it myself with any other man than Spottington, but I hate him, and I have reason to suspect that this is but an excuse, after all, to call me

out, for he and I have quarrelled before, only then he could not show his teeth."

"And so, for a fool and a coquette, your life must be staked?"

"Be it so,—we must take these chances, and I myself have been a fool. Well, you will be my second,—that's all I wanted you for."

D'Arcy and Lord William separated at the end of the Colonnade in Regent Street.

D'Arcy then remembered Miss Norris's letter, which Lord William's recital had caused him partly to forget. He searched for it in his pocket, and could not find it. Neither could he find a silk pocket-handkerchief, which had been in the same pocket. He was not long in concluding that a thief had deprived him of the one, and unavoidably of the other at the same time, for he recollected having taken out his handkerchief, when drawing out the letter to read the direction, at the moment he was joined by Lord William B——, and that, in the interruption, he re deposited the two together. It was evident that, in abstracting the handkerchief, the letter had been lost.

D'Arcy was sorry for this accident, it looked like carelessness on his part, which made him regret having proffered his services; besides,

he did not well know how, before the next evening, he could convey to Emily the knowledge that her wishes had not been obeyed. If she had not denied it, he would still have felt assured that the letter was for Harcourt. It was so unlucky, not having seen the direction,—it would have been some clue, as to knowing when Emily could expect an answer to her epistle. Without running the risk of Mrs. Norris's being informed, D'Arcy did not see how he could let Emily be made aware immediately of this misadventure; and Mrs. Norris, it was clear, was the last person she meant should know any thing about it. D'Arcy did not much think the pickpocket would forward the letter to its destination; it was not an impossibility, however. In the mean time, he came to the conclusion that nothing more could be done till the next night, at Mrs. Norrises.

He went to Tattersall's and met Harcourt.

"Harcourt," said D'Arcy, "after all, you never told me what occasioned this blow up of yours with the Norrises."

"Céleste wrote an anonymous letter to Mrs. Norris, taking away her character. It was found out, and traced to Céleste; and poor Mrs. Norris was furious, because, as she said, if it had been

sent to any body else,—but it was a thing which had never happened to her before, and she never could forgive it. Had she deserved it, she declared, she should not have minded; but as it was, it was too bad. Poor woman! I never saw her in such a state of anger before. In addition to this, Céleste gave the whole account of the gold chain I purchased for her a month ago, when we made friends for a day or two. She heard me say I had won a hundred pounds of String the black-leg, and, as she asked about it, I could not do less than buy her that chain with some of the money.—All this is her infernal spite against Emily."

"And was it for this you were turned out of the Norris establishment?"

"Not entirely; but I had both women upon me at once: and, as I could not well deny the little transaction of the chain, Emily sulked; but her mother drew up, as if she was old Scarron's widow, and said she could not permit my continuing any longer my visits—that Emily's affections were engaged—her health gone; and, as it now appeared, her own character attacked, which was the most extraordinary and unheard of malice, and that she could not disguise from herself, that even the last horrible aspersion had

arisen, in some measure, from her intimacy with one who was every way unworthy of the innocent confidence reposed in me by herself and her daughter. So now you have it. What could I do?"

"What did you do?"

"I left the house, crest-fallen, and have been ill ever since. I have called, and they don't admit me."

"Then you will not be there to-morrow night?"

"Yes, for I shall write a note to Emily to say I must see her, which I must."

"Then we shall meet there. I am going. I make love to neither mother nor daughter, and am in the odour of sanctity with both."

How happy Violet Woodville felt all the day, and days before, at the prospect of meeting D'Arcy at the Norrises that evening. There is so much happiness in the certainty of meeting a beloved object! and to know that you are also the object of their wishes!

This certainty, which is soon acquired, is one of Love's young decrees, and its most pleasing one. There is the quiet pleasure,but not the agitation; the passion is still growing, like a rose-bud; there is the beautiful opening flower, but the

thorns are yet unfelt, and you could think there are none.

> Love in the soul, not bold and confident,
> But, like Aurora, trembles into being;
> And, with faint, flickering, and uncertian beams,
> Gives notice to the awakening world within us
> Of the full blazing orb that soon shall rise,
> And kindle all its passions.—Then begin
> Sorrow and joy: unutterable joy,
> And rapturous sorrow!
>
> NEALE.

Violet as yet knew nothing of the "sorrow and joy; unutterable joy, and rapturous sorrow;" but she felt exceedingly happy.

D'Arcy was one of the earliest comers to Mrs. Norris's, but, for once, Violet was not quite his first object. He hastened towards Emily Norris, who was then unoccupied, and looking brighter than when he saw her the day previous.

D'Arcy at once told her of the ill-luck about her letter, and said he could only endeavour to atone for his carelessness by being doubly anxious to execute any further commands of hers.

"I had not seen the address," said D'Arcy, "and if you had not told me to the contrary (at least, if I remember right), I should have thought a friend of mine would have been in greater despair than even myself at the loss of your letter."

"You did not see the address?"

"No." D'Arcy was too well bred to ask it then, but he would have liked to have done so.

Emily thought a moment; and, colouring, said, with evident hesitation, "Well, perhaps, as the letter was lost, it is as well . . . .—What I mean is, that I will not write another—and let it be forgotten altogether. I believe I was wrong."

"Certainly; forgotten let it be, if you desire it," said D'Arcy; and he was moving away, when Emily gently called him by name—"Mr. d'Arcy, I hope, though I have not expressed it, that you will believe how much obliged I shall ever feel to you for your kindness yesterday morning. I shall not forget it, and I did not expect it from you. I had a sort of consciousness you did not—much like me; and I am the more grateful to you—I shall be so always."

Emily Norris had a very melodious voice; and in saying these words it sounded more so than usual. There seemed a sincerity about her, too, which D'Arcy did not think she possessed; and he left her, liking her better, or disliking her less, than he had ever done before. "And, undoubtedly, she is very handsome," said he, inwardly, as he turned to look for Violet Woodville.

"It is three long days since I have seen you," said D'Arcy, addressing Miss Woodville.

"Yes, so it is," answered Violet, as if she too thought they were long days.

"And now that I do see you—if you knew how much pleasure it gives me!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

Not knowing what answer to make, Violet said nothing; but the embarrassment in her ingenuous countenance did not make it less beautiful; and so thought D'Arcy, as he contemplated her, ere he again spoke.

"There is but one thing to mar my satisfaction—the uncertainty of when I shall again possess it. Of that you are heedless; and even your pity for my uncertainty is perhaps denied me?"

"Oh, I would give you all the pity in the world, if I did but know why it was to be given; that is, if I really knew it was for something that you might be pitied for, with good reason," answered Violet, with gaiety, but with some embarrassment.

"Perhaps," said D'Arcy, gravely, "I have a right to your pity, though it may not suit you to believe so."

"I never could pity *you*."

"Why?"

"I really hardly know how to say it; but I never could pity you, oh, never! You strike me

as a person that never either pitied, or would pity."

"I must have appeared to you then as an uncommonly unamiable character?"

"No, not at all; but I have an idea you would so despise being pitied; and I cannot fancy your being very pitying or kind to others."

"Neither, upon the whole, am I; there you are right. But then it is that I care for so few people. I am often amused, but seldom interested."

"Often amused!" said Violet, opening her eyes wider; "that surprises me, because that is what you don't appear to be."

"And you have corrected me,—no, it is true I am not amused—hardly ever—I meant something else."

"What then?"

"I can very often laugh, *con amore*, but still I am not amused, I confess, even then."

"Exactly; you are only sneering." Violet blushed; she feared she had said something very rude.

D'Arcy was a little surprised; but he answered, "Well, and if I allow you are right, at my age you will often do the same. But how have you guessed so well?—you never saw me sneer?"

"Yes, I have, very often; I did not like you for it at first."

At first! thought D'Arcy.

"I must be honest enough to confess I never meant you to have made this discovery," continued D'Arcy. "While I am near you, my mind is in such a different state from what it is at any other time: I hoped you would only have judged of me as such as I am when with you; for you have the power (I have learnt it now) to awaken all that is good within me; and it is hard that, without my leave, you should have seen the *revers de la médaille*."

"I think you ought to be so glad, on the contrary. I could not endure being better thought of than I deserve; I would rather, almost, that a person had too bad, than too good an opinion of me."

"I do not doubt it; but you and I are such different persons: there is a perfection about you that Nature has utterly denied to me. I sink beneath my own iniquity, and will willingly stoop to deceive—that is, when I care to do so."

"Oh, I don't say that: I dislike deceit."

"But if frankness should bring upon me your despisal?"

"Never: and, besides, I thought, before, you *were* frank; now I almost fear you were not."

"Did you think thus of me before, Miss Woodville?" said D'Arcy, brightening: "thank you; you shall see, from this day forward, a want of sincerity shall not prove my failing in your eyes; I will promise *that*, at every hazard. Am I restored a little to your good opinion?"

"Yes, a little, you are," answered Violet, smiling; and both were silent, and both were happy.

"Miss Woodville," at length, said D'Arcy, "there are those, I fear, of whom you think much better than of myself; are there not?"

"No, Mr. d'Arcy."

"No? Yet others have tried, more daringly than I have ventured upon doing, to gain your approbation. I began by admiring; I have ended by fearing you; and when I approach you, I am actually timid."

"Oh, no, Mr d'Arcy," replied Violet, gravely; "you will not make me believe that: I am not a person to intimidate any one."

"Not even a lover?" said D'Arcy, in a very low and clear voice.

Violet blushed and started.

"Not even a lover?" repeated D'Arcy, when he received no answer.

"No, no; why should, why should they ——"

"It would depend upon the measure of their affection," said D'Arcy; "but then *you* could not be loved moderately. Oh, heavens! what a world of affection might live for ever upon one look from you!"

"I have no lovers, Mr. d'Arcy, so I know nothing of all this, and I could make no one feel timid, I am sure; and there is no one ready, with such a great deal of affection to bestow upon me, who, perhaps, would be very undeserving of it all."

"I could contradict all you have said—I see you would rather I did not."

D'Arcy rose abruptly, and went towards Mr. Harcourt, who entered the room at that moment, looking uncommonly bashful, and as if he knew he was a very naughty boy indeed.

"Allow me to support you on this trying occasion," said D'Arcy. "I will give you the aid of my presence, so as to enable you to approach somewhat nearer to the chair of *la dame de vos pensées*."

"Why, of course," said Harcourt, seriously, "a man in my situation does feel very awkward: Emily is such a very correct person—that anecdote about the chain must have offended her—it would any woman, any delicate-minded creature

like Emily. D'Arcy, suppose you come up with with me to face Mrs. Norris?—Do you think she looks black?"

"Very; but still I should argue in favour of your obtaining her consent, if you propose for Emily."

"Really," said Harcourt, seriously, "do you know, she is such a very singular woman, that's more than I am sure of, upon my honour."

"Indeed! I would not be uneasy, nevertheless: 'while there's life, there's hope,' you know."

"Oh, tell me, D'Arcy—so you were second?—I meant to have asked about it sooner; but these women put everything out of my head. So B——— has only a flesh wound in the small of the arm; and Spottington has left the country?"

"Yes; and carried off Céleste with him. They went away in a chaise-and-four, that he had waiting for him, in the lane, in case of accident. William had one ready for himself, too; and Céleste was to get into whichever post-chaise was called in requisition. However, she fainted away when the pistols went off; and Spottington found her in the bottom of his chaise, with the post-boy giving her a dram. They are at Calais by this time."

"I am d——d glad of it. Céleste has always been in my way."

"Yes,—but she has the prettiest eyes I ever saw. What is Goring about?" and D'Arcy returned towards Violet Woodville, who was almost hidden by a group of young men who were standing round her. The conversation seemed animated, and Violet looked very gay.

D'Arcy joined the group.

"Miss Woodville has been saying very unkind things to all of us, D'Arcy, and we want her to make amends to one of us, at least, by declaring which of us four she likes the best; now you're come we are five."

"And suppose I were to tell you," said Violet, laughing, but feeling shy, "you know all the rest of you would be displeased."

"Oh, but never mind," exclaimed Mr. Goring, "we will put up with the affront, for the sake of knowing who can, or who does please Miss Woodville."

"But that is what you will be none the nearer to, Mr. Goring. I shall not tell, after all, who it is I like the best, but which of you all I dislike the least," continued Violet, smiling in the gaiety of her heart.

"Oh! then you do admit there is one person

you really do like!—what a happy, happy person he must be!"

"No, indeed, I said no such thing, I am sure, Mr. Goring,—I did not say there was anybody I liked. Did I? did I?" Violet asked, looking round in much confusion.

"No, Miss Woodville," answered D'Arcy, hastily, "you said nothing of the kind; and as we all know it is not any of us who can really please you, so if you had said so it could only make us a little more miserable than you know you have made us long before."

"Yes, you have no idea how you break all our hearts," said Mr. Goring; "but, for my part, I would be contented if you would only be as merciful to me as you are to D'Arcy."

"Then you do not know what Miss Woodville's mercy is, or you would not say so," exclaimed D'Arcy, sharply, for he saw the annoyance Mr. Goring's speech occasioned Violet Woodville.

Mr. Goring had long been one of her admirers, but he had met with no encouragement. His manner was not such as could render him successful with a person whose mind was not depraved; and Mr. Goring had not an idea of any woman's mind being anything else.

"D'Arcy," said Goring, in a whisper, "that was a sharp answer of yours to curry favour."

"Be assured I will make no more such answers, Goring, when they are unnecessary," D'Arcy drily replied.

"Miss Woodville," said Mr. Goring, boldly, "Mr. d'Arcy, I presume, is a declared swain?"

"Goring, why do you annoy her?" said one of the other young men, *sotto voce,* but Mr. Goring did not appear to have heard the reproof.

D'Arcy at once saved Violet from having to reply.

"No," he said, "I am not a declared lover; Miss Woodville has never allowed me to become one; and I am sufficiently aware of my own demerits, to see she is not unjust even when she disdains."

"My father, I think, must want me, I will go to him," said Violet, rising from her seat.

"Going, Miss Woodville?" exclaimed Mr. Goring, in pretended astonishment, and annoying high spirits; and, as he spoke, he stood before her with his arms outspread, so as to impede her passage.

During the last ten minutes, Violet Woodville had been enduring great annoyance. She was hurt to the quick by Mr. Goring's manner, and

his words too, and she thought to herself, all this he thinks he may say to me because I am only an opera-dancer; if I were anything else he would not venture to have behaved thus. But now, as he stood insolently before her, Violet suddenly summoned her courage, and she answered Mr. Goring's question, when he repeated it,—"Going, Miss Woodville, going?"

"Yes, Mr. Goring, you have been so agreeable, were I to stay longer I should be quite spoiled."

D'Arcy offered her his arm, she took it, and he led her instantly to her father, who was with the music party at the end of the room, and, as well as Mrs. Woodville, intently listening to Madame N—— singing Gluck's beautiful 'Eurydice,' and the music of that beautiful song soothed the feelings of the wounded Violet Woodville, and she could have listened for ever to one of the most enchanting airs that was ever composed.

"Did you hear that impertinence?" said Mr. Goring, turning round to his companions.

"Not at all," cried two or three youths at once, "not at all, you deserved it, Goring,—you were very uncivil to her."

"Pray, what did I say that was uncivil?"

"Oh! it was your manner, you know you meant it."

"Well, I wonder what right she has to expect anything better? She is Stanmore's mistress, if she belongs to no one else."

"What's that you say? She is a dear, honest, real little Venus, that I will swear to," cried a half-fledged, tender-hearted young midshipman, reddening with zeal.

"No, no, come, come; be fair, Goring. She's a good girl now, and Spenser is right," said one.

"Yes," cried another; "and Stanmore would not stand by hearing you take away her character, I can tell you, if he were here."

"No, poor little girl," exclaimed a third, "she is only too honest for it to last, I fear."

"You *hope*, you mean."

"Granted, for she is honest,—so, Goring, don't scandalize her because you don't happen to be the favourite; that's not fair, Goring."

"Never mind, Goring; perhaps you will be the winning horse next time," said the young sailor again; "there's more pretty girls than one in the world, though there's not another in Europe half as pretty as Miss Woodville; but then, you know, some people must take what they can get,—that's what they tell the Middies on board the Atalanta."

Mr. Goring, finding by these observations that

he had the worst, and not the best of it, acknowledged his error; but added, he had no idea of an Opera-dancer standing up for virtue; in former days they would not have dared to have thought about such a thing,—it was all that cursed cant about Reform which had brought things to such a pass.

"My dear Violet," said Mr. Woodville, "Mr. d'Arcy was talking a great deal to you last night at Mrs. Norris's; what was he saying to you?"

"Oh papa, Mr. d'Arcy is such a good person!" exclaimed Violet, eagerly; "when I find how different other people can be, I like him so much!"

Mr. Woodville opened his eyes; he was sitting at breakfast with his daughter.

Poor Mrs. Woodville was studying very hard the part of Elvira, in Pizarro, which she had been requested to perform on an emergency at Covent Garden, on a two days' notice.

"What's that you say about Mr. d'Arcy, Charles?"

"We were talking,—I and little Violet."

"Oh, very well; I am not attending,—I cannot. While I think of it, Mr. Pizarro,—Mr. Woodville, I mean,—mind I have ordered some nice little landrails for dinner; they are expensive little birds, to be sure; but I am fond of them, and my

cold is so bad,—so I thought we would have a treat. If my voice is not better by to-morrow, I shall never be able to get through the great tragedy scenes about the child, and the little pathetic parts: I must have some new eggs beat up."

"Well, Violet," resumed Mr. Woodville, having previously expressed himself content with the prospect of the landrails, "we did not end our remarks about Mr. d'Arcy."

"No, papa, but now I will tell you all about it."

"About what, Violet?" exclaimed Mrs. Woodville.

"How you do interrupt one!"

"To be sure, that must be the case as long as you sit here, my dear!" said Mrs. Woodville. "Mr. Woodville, I suppose I am to have some breakfast, though I am to act at Covent Garden to-morrow night. How rude you are sometimes,—and so unfeeling too,—cut me another slice of bread and butter, Violet. I hope I shall not forget to tell Hummings that the landrails must not be over-roasted; that dries them up, and they are not so good."

"Well, Violet, so what did Mr. d'Arcy say, to please you so much?"

Violet recounted to her father Mr. Goring's

disagreeable manners, and the opposite conduct of Mr. d'Arcy.

"Mr. d'Arcy behaved like a gentleman, and Mr. Goring did not;" replied Woodville. "But, Violet, I am not for Mr. d'Arcy falling in love with you, or you with him."

"No, papa: but then he is not in love with me," said Violet, blushing, "I assure you."

"I suppose, you mean, he has not told you so, —eh, my darling child?"

"No, dear father, indeed he never has exactly, not yet."

"Well, Violet, you know I am not a silly, strict father but I wish to caution you,—you are very young, my child,—you do not know the world, as I do; so it is I who, as your father, must be wise in time for you.

"You see, Violet, although you are a pretty little girl, you are not a lady. We have almost brought you up like one, and you are a great deal better than many ladies, every way, I'll be bound; but still you are not one. Every one knows your mamma acts, and that I play the violoncello, that we may earn money enough to live, and for you, too, not to be ill off, happen what may.

"Now all these gentlemen that you meet with,

and who make you such fine speeches, may in themselves, some of them, be very nice people, but they will not fall in love with you the less for that; and their telling you so means no good, for they will not marry you, Violet,—or if they would, their relations will not allow them to do so.

"They are to be blamed for it, when these gentlemen go too far, because they are well aware that though it *may* do you harm, it *can* do none whatever to them. Mind, Violet, I don't say it is an impossibility that you should ever marry a gentleman, for it is not; and you deserve it, if ever any one did; but it is not a likely thing: and when I see these young men buzzing about you, it alarms me, because I always guess it means no good.

"Now this Mr. d'Arcy is a very taking young man indeed; I myself cannot but like him, and he has an open way that wins one's heart, somehow. At first, too, I thought he came to see you because he was Lord Stanmore's great friend." Woodville sighed,—partly because he was out of breath, for he was not in the habit of delivering such long speeches. "And now I do think it is all for himself, or rather for you, Violet, that he likes to see us. But that will not

do,—Mr. d'Arcy is not a gentleman who will ever think of marrying, were he to be in love ever so,—he is not a marrying person,—and, indeed, I have heard one or two things of him, which have made me not like him quite so well. At all events, I dont wish you to like him too much, Violet." He paused at length, and Violet Woodville trembled as she ventured to ask her father, what it was he had heard against Mr. d'Arcy.

"They say he is very apt to fall in love, and not very long either to care for one lady."

"Oh, father, that is so unlike Mr. d'Arcy's manner,—he has enemies who say this!"

"His manner is not what is to tell us about a gentleman's constancy. But I did not think my saying this would annoy you, as I see it does,—you must like Mr. d'Arcy very much, I begin to think, Violet?"

"No, indeed, father; but only be just to him, and I——I will do anything you like,—only pray don't be unkind to Mr. d'Arcy on my account,—because he has been so kind,—and I am sure he does not deserve that."

"Well, Violet," said Mrs. Woodville, looking off her book, "I have been hearing something of what your father's been saying, and I hope

you will attend to it,—you have been distracting me sadly. What I still expect is, that Lord Stanmore will propose for you, my dear; what I always say is, why should not he? But it is right of your father to tell you not to think of him only, all day long, because there is no saying; and, if his mother should get better, which she may, you are sure she will be against you. Now, call Hummings,—she must be home from the green-grocer's by this time; before she does the dinner, I must speak about the landrails, or I know they will be dried to a chip. Lock up the tea, Violet. John," said Mrs. Woodville, turning to the slender-looking footboy, who entered the room, "is Mrs. Hummings not come in yet?"

"No, Ma'am; am I to take away the breakfast things?"

"Yes; and, another time, leave out the word *things*,—breakfast,—not breakfast things. Let me know when Hummings does come back. There's a ring at the door; oh, it's only Dupas."

The old Frenchman was always well received by the Woodvilles, and Violet loved the old man.

"So," gaily exclaimed M. Dupas, "I hear of nothing but Violet's lovers; she is a sly little

thing, and never tells me a word about them; but I see and I hear," and he winked good-humouredly at his protegée.

"Well, Dupas, let us have them,—count them up for me, like the cherries on a string, that I may hear and choose for her myself," said Woodville, laughing.

"Well, then, I am told there's Mr. d'Arcy thinks of no such thing but Miss Violet, and never goes anywhere but he is to see my little pupil. Is that so?"

"You see I was not so wrong, Violet," said Mr. Woodville, archly. Violet blushed and laughed; for she had recovered a little from the conversation with her father, and she could not help feeling gratified that people thought Mr. d'Arcy did care for her. But she was embarrassed, and she caught hold of M. Dupas' two hands, and began dancing with him the part she had to perform with her supposed lover in the ballet. M. Dupas only laughed, and looked at her dancing with delighted eyes.

"M. Dupas," said Mrs. Woodville, "what do you think of Mr. Harcourt's marrying Emily Norris?"

"He will not do it, I am sure."

"Well, I must leave you,—for I am so taken

up with this new part I have to act on a day or two's notice. I suppose Hummings is come home by this time. Perhaps you will dine with us to-day, M. Dupas?"

M. Dupas accepted the invitation.

CHAPTER VI.

"Thus doth the wily fisher weave his net."

"Alack, alack! that heaven should practise stratagems
Upon so soft a subject."

ROMEO AND JULIET.

WHILE Violet Woodville and her father were talking about D'Arcy, they little imagined where he was at that very time bestowing himself. D'Arcy was walking up and down within five doors of the Woodvilles' abode.

He did not look pleasant, he yawned, and with his stick he beat his boot, and once he struck the iron railing very hard. He kept continually looking over his shoulder, and occasionally walked round the corner of the street, but always re-appeared in a few seconds, though cautiously, and with the air of a man who is wisely thinking, when he cannot observe much himself, that neither can he be much observed. At first, he only looked impatient and bored beyond endurance.

It is astonishing what changes come over a

visage, which can reflect with much expression the workings of the mind. D'Arcy's was absolutely peculiar, from the force of his countenance upon all occasions.

Any one aware of his intimacy with the Woodvilles would have expected, perhaps, to see D'Arcy, as he was so long in their street, either gazing sentimentally up at the windows of the house, where he might have beheld part of Violet's sleeve or Mrs. Woodville's cap-string,—things quite important enough for a lover's fancy to feed upon a whole day; or that, in the hope of being seen, though he could not see, he would have continued his walk in front of the house; or, at least, that his eyes should have wandered to the front door, as if from that issue he trusted for the reward of his pedestrian watchings. But not a bit of it, for D'Arcy's eyes were invariably inclined in one direction only, and that was always downwards.

It was almost as if the brick foundation alone of Mr. Woodville's house drew his attention,—the bottom of the iron railings, or the lowest step of the door,—down it was, always down, that his eyes were directed.

At last he became more demonstrative in his actions, for he went and peeped into the area,

and presently did so again: this time it was a satisfactory survey, for, with excessive alertness, D'Arcy retreated backwards, and began walking rapidly, but looking now as if he wished to knock hardly anybody down, instead of everybody, so that it was plain he was at once in better humour.

In the meantime a woman was seen slowly ascending from the said area. She was rather stout, and forty; she had on a cotton gown, a white apron, a coal-scuttle black bonnet, and horrid shoes upon criminal hoofs (for it would not be right to designate them as feet); and, without describing her any further, it is sufficient to say that, seen from any point of view, she might have been deemed peculiarly exempt from the power of inspiring any man with the desire for her presence manifested by D'Arcy. She was never intended to have to resist the insidious attentions of a man *à bonnes fortunes*. It might be charitably inferred that Providence had considered these small temptations as unnecessary trials, and had, therefore, placed this good woman specially beyond their influence.

The respectable person in question was no other than Mrs. Hummings, and she it was who fulfilled the functions of ladies' maid, cook, and

housekeeper in the Woodville *ménage*. She it was also who escorted Violet Woodville in her morning walks.

D'Arcy had ascertained, by means of a servant he had sent to reconnoitre on six successive mornings, that it was at this hour, namely, between ten and eleven, that Mrs. Hummings was in the habit of leaving the house upon the furtherance of some domestic affairs; for instance, there was a connexion between these matutinal walks and the landrails Mrs. Woodville was to eat for her dinner that day.

D'Arcy desired to speak with Mrs. Hummings, and to do so cost him all the bore and the exertion of which the reader has been made aware. Now he beheld her: there she was, plodding first down one street, then up another.

D'Arcy only waited till Mrs. Hummings was out of sight of Mr. Woodville's house, in order to address her. He felt his courage rather at a low ebb, when he made up his mind that now or never was the moment of attack.

He switched his cane several times, coughed, kicked and scuffled with his boots, and, at last, brought himself into a parallel line with the black coal-scuttle bonnet.

First imagining, and then finding she really

had less room on the pavement than previously, Mrs. Hummings looked round and saw D'Arcy. She altered her pace,—but he did the same; she eyed him sternly,—but D'Arcy replied by an affable smile. "Ma'am," said he, "could you be so very obliging as to direct me to —— street?"

"Yes, sir; turn to the right, and then to the left, and there you are."

"Thank you, ma'am. Pray have I not the pleasure of speaking to a most respectable domestic in the family of Mr. and Mrs. Woodville?"

"Yes, sir; did you want any thing with them? I know your face, as coming there very often, sir."

"No,—but I have much wished to see you, and have sought this opportunity of meeting you."

"Sir!" said Mrs. Hummings, looking less condescendingly; "what is that you're saying, sir?"

"I own, I have desired to see you, Mrs. Hummings; I have so constantly heard your praises from all the family, that I was well aware of the lady-like person I should find you, and that knowledge gives me courage to address you on a little business of my own."

Mrs. Hummings had been colouring very much while D'Arcy spoke, and she now turned full round upon him, with red cheeks, and, likewise, red eyes like a leopard's, so, at least, they seemed to poor D'Arcy, while she exclaimed, "Sir! a gentleman like you, visiting our family, ought to be ashamed of yourself, for looking after a respectable woman like me, that's old enough to be your mother. Sir! I would have you to know better!"

Mrs. Hummings bounced past D'Arcy, as if she did not mean her last words to be taken in vain.

There's no saying what D'Arcy felt; but he had a material point to gain,—he was a man of great courage, and he did not allow his feelings to divert him from its pursuit;—he followed Mrs. Hummings.

"Good heavens, ma'am! could you for a moment suppose I had the intention to insult a lady like yourself? of whose excellent character I was that instant telling you I had been so well-informed?—my business with you was not exactly about yourself."

These words struck Mrs. Hummings; she began to think she had been precipitate in her comprehension of D'Arcy's discourse. It may

have been owing to a little adventure, of the nature she now suspected, having befallen her the previous week, in an ill-lighted street, and whilst the moon was under a cloud, that Mrs. Hummings was on this occasion so susceptible. Having discovered her mistake, she was anxious, by her present civility, to make amends for it.

The ice broken, and upon the whole, as D'Arcy hoped, not unsuccessfully, he ventured to proceed, and requested Mrs. Hummings's approval of his joining herself and Miss Woodville the next morning in Kensington Gardens, should they happen to be there. D'Arcy explained that Violet had no knowledge of his request, but he said he had something of importance to communicate, and that this was the only means of conversing with Miss Woodville alone. He hoped, therefore, that Mrs. Hummings would be so kind as not to mention to Mr. or Mrs. Woodville the fact of his designing to meet their daughter, as they might, or might not, approve of it; D'Arcy said he really could not say which, but at all events, he observed, under her chaperonage, Mrs. Hummings must be aware there would be no impropriety in his appearing accidentally to meet Miss Woodville in Kensington Gardens."

"What's the meaning of that word, sir?" asked Mrs. Hummings, gloomily.

"What word?"

"Some such word as *chapperingage*.—What do you mean by saying that sort of word to me, sir?"

"Oh, I understand," answered D'Arcy, hardly able to conceal his laughter, while he explained the meaning of the word chaperonage, and at the conclusion of the explanation he slipped a couple of sovereigns into Mrs. Hummings' red ungloved hand. Mrs. H. stared, and tried to return the money; D'Arcy would not hear of it. "I could not,—I could not, Mrs. Hummings,—I only attempted to make a small amends for the unfortunate alarm I at first occasioned you by my abrupt intrusion; as a proof of your forgiveness, I must beg,—indeed, I must desire you will say no more about it. I fear I have already taken up your time too much,—I hope you will be good enough to—to"———D'Arcy hesitated with his words, for he hardly knew what he was saying.

At that moment he beheld, advancing up the street, a well-known associate whom he would rather not have met just then.

At that hour of the morning, D'Arcy considered

he was quite safe, and might devote, unseen, his attentions to Mrs. Hummings; nothing but a clerk of the Foreign office could be visible at such an hour, and this was not the way to Downing-street: otherwise, his present companion was not the lady he would have aimed at being seen to escort; and there could not have occurred a more laughable circumstance to any creature who knew D'Arcy, than to have beheld him at this moment.

Besides the sort of person D'Arcy was in himself, he was always remarkably *recherché* in his dress; he was not less so than usual now, and Mrs. Hummings, of all people in the world, offered a singularly uninviting contrast to D'Arcy. Still there he was, bending his head under her black, horrible bonnet, and talking with all the eagerness he might have done, if she had not been old, or ugly, or honest,—in one sense of the word.

The first two qualities Mrs. Hummings did not concern herself about; it was her having some glimmering of the last-mentioned one which caused her still to hesitate, while D'Arcy felt as if he could have hung her up to the next lamp-post. "Nonsense, nonsense; it can do Miss Woodville no harm. Well, only for once—I cannot stay—I see a friend; now, my dear Mrs.

Hummings!——there; what does it signify—who will know?"

Between Mrs. Hummings's anxiety to return the sovereigns, and D'Arcy's impatient refusal to receive them, they very nearly dropped. D'Arcy could only exclaim, "Turn round that corner; get out of the way;" and, without waiting for the reply, walked quickly up the street, till he was within hail of his unwelcome friend.

"He cannot have seen her," said D'Arcy to himself, but almost aloud, as he joined a pale and interesting-looking young man, of distinguished appearance.

D'Arcy turned his head—Mrs. Hummings had obeyed his injunctions, and was out of sight.

"My dear fellow, how glad I am to see you!" cried D'Arcy, with extended hands.

"And so am I to see you, D'Arcy; but I did not expect to do so just here. Who on earth were you talking to, when I saw you at the end of the street?"

"Oh, an old woman, wife of a man I owe some money to."

"Oh, a dun!—but what has fetched you out, at this time of day, in such a direction as this?"

"I had to see that woman, and have a good deal to do to-day; so I got up early."

"Not a bit of it, D'Arcy: you have got some love affair in the wind."

"What! with that old devil, do you think?—But tell me,—how is Lady Stanmore?"

D'Arcy's companion looked grave at once, although he answered, "Better, thank God!—My Mother has been wretchedly ill; but they do think her better—at least I was assured there is no immediate danger, or you may be certain I should not have left her. But I have been out of London so long, that I had much to arrange, and am obliged to be in town for a day or two; but I shall return to my poor Mother the moment I can."

"When did you come up?"

"Last night."

"Where are you going?"

"I am almost ashamed to say; however, to you, I——"

"Shall we walk on together?"

"Do. But—why, I will tell you where I was going,—to those Woodvilles; it is so long since I have seen them; but I am half ashamed to confess it."

"Pshaw; I know them very well too—now, she is a beautiful little girl: I am almost in love with her myself."

"What has she been at, D'Arcy?"

"Nothing, I think; the father and mother keep such a look-out upon her."

"They are right; for she is almost too good to be thrown away. But what men are about her?"

"There's Goring, chiefly, I suspect—and Dormer, besides Cramden; but it was before you left town Cramden began with her, was it not?"

"Yes; but doesn't she encourage any of them?"

"No; it's very odd; but I don't think she does."

"Singular! for there is not one of those girls that dance that ever were good for anything; or, if they are in the beginning, they are always utterly and entirely corrupted in six months."

"Utterly and entirely ——"

"Extraordinary, is not it?"

"Most extraordinary!"

"By-the-bye, D'Arcy, did it ever appear to you as if she cared for me at all?"

"No; I never observed anything, as if she did in the least."

"Oh," said Lord Stanmore, in a mortified tone, "I was fool enough to think she liked me better than other people, at one time."

"Well, I dare say she did; but, you know, you

have been away a month; and, you know, '*les absens ont toujours tort.*'"

"She is a beautiful creature, D'Arcy, is she not?" said Lord Stanmore, thoughtfully.

"Yes, beautiful!"

"Such a graceful being?"

"So graceful!"

"And such pretty manners!—so unlike anything belonging to her class!"

"So unlike!"

"Nothing plebeian about her—the most aristocratic loveliness she has; hasn't she?"

"Oh, she has, certainly."

"I wonder," pursued Lord Stanmore, as if he were thinking aloud—"I wonder what will be the fate of a creature like that? If she is virtuous, she will end by having a rich tradesman's low-souled son for her husband; or else some rascally singer at the Opera will marry her, to make money by her talents—spend it—ill use, and, probably, abandon her!"

"Just so——"

"And how hard, that that should be the result of having a mind superior to the set of people she associates with!"

"Oh, so hard!"

"D'Arcy, what are you about?—you don't

talk; for the last half hour you have done nothing but echo my words."

"Have I? Oh, I suppose I was thinking of something else. I have been so bothered lately: I am waiting all this time, you know, for an appointment abroad."

"But I thought you had got that settled?"

"Why, so I had; but I can't leave England just now—I am so in debt, and it does not suit me. So I have made a compromise; for I found out I should oblige Lord ——, by pretending not to be in a hurry; and he gave G——, his nephew, my appointment: I am to have another later. I want to get something in England, if I can—I mean to try."

"Well, I am so glad to have met you, D'Arcy."

By this time the two friends had reached the street wherein was Mr. Woodville's house, and D'Arcy was taking leave of Lord Stanmore, when the latter exclaimed, "Oh, but do come in with me here; I had almost rather you would; I am out of spirits, and you will help me to get on with them; it is difficult sometimes to find conversation for these sort of people; and as you know them————"

D'Arcy did not require to be asked twice.

The Woodvilles were much surprised by the

appearance of Lord Stanmore, and Woodville was too open-hearted not to make his satisfaction evident; while Mrs. Woodville made a thousand kind inquiries after the mother of *her* intended son-in-law.

Lord Stanmore cared little to reply to her; he only wanted to talk to, and to look at Violet.

I do not know that we can ever more fully tell how dear another is to us, than when we meet them after an absence. We did not know before how the sight of that object could make our pulses beat, or chill us with the nervousness of insecure affection, so deeply felt by a doubting heart. These are feelings which have their silent agony, for they are among those that are never told, or if they are, who can imagine the mental suffering that has been endured by the mere force of the words in which those sufferings are told, words that seem trifling in the ears of even an interested listener. But so it is; our most unpleasant hours have often been occasioned by the smallest nothings, and quite as often by our own susceptibility alone. All of us perhaps have these sensations, but not one of us can enter into them when they are another's. Of this truth we have an innate consciousness, and from this cause the minutiæ of any individual's unhappiness re-

main untold even to his most intimate friend. If, at the end of a long life, a prosperous man—one whose cares were established to have been but few—if this man could lay bare the whole past feelings of his existence, he himself would be astonished at the number of small and long-forgotten sorrows he had undergone; things so little tangible, that the pen could not define, and the tongue would have been despised for uttering them.

D'Arcy, after greeting Violet as usual, withdrew himself from her, and obligingly took up the attention of her parents and of M. Dupas, who was also in the room. A sufficiently animated conversation was thus got up between these four persons, which left Lord Stanmore at liberty to approach Miss Woodville. He was, however, embarrassed, and she felt so likewise, though from a different cause. She was conscious of being changed towards Lord Stanmore, now that she met him again, and by him was forcibly reminded that his attachment to her remained the same. Still she talked to him, and only grew absent when she began to remember that as yet D'Arcy had not once addressed her. This was so unlike him, she was at a loss to account for it. He went on, however, talking to the Woodvilles

as if Violet did not exist in his heart; and her astonishment at this neglect grew greater every minute; for we all know that if we ever make mountains of mole-hills, it is when our self-love is in the case.

At length there was a sort of general pause, which Mrs Woodville interrupted by saying that to-morrow was to be the next Opera, the last night of her daughter's appearance this season.

"If I continue hearing that my mother is better, I shall certainly go to-morrow to the Opera," said Lord Stanmore. "D'Arcy, will you come to my box?"

"No," replied D'Arcy; "I have an engagement that will prevent me, one I cannot avoid."

Violet heard, but she thought she could not have heard. She looked at her admirer, but his face was not turned towards her. Her manner grew feverish. When we are quite young, from being unused to deal with covert annoyances, we bear them not only impatiently, but betray by our deportment our secret discomfort.

D'Arcy's apparent neglect of her was as nothing to Violet, compared with his declaration that he should not go to the Opera on her last night!

Violet could not recover from the dismay it

occasioned her; and in vain she tried to read D'Arcy's mind in his countenance. Lord Stanmore in the mean time felt deeply hurt by the comparatively cold reception he received from Miss Woodville; and now in moody silence he ceased to address himself to her, and had it then been possible he would have expressed his perception of her estrangement. D'Arcy and his friend at length rose to take leave, and then the former fixed his eyes upon Violet. She looked at him, and hers were eyes that asked his pity. She almost drew her breath with hesitation, lest she should lose some one last word of D'Arcy's. She yet hoped to hear him inquire when he should again meet her.

D'Arcy had always found so many side-ways of ascertaining this, but not a syllable passed his lips in allusion to it. He held out his hand to bid her adieu, and Violet tried to speak, but the words would not come. D'Arcy looked at her once more, but this time she was sick at heart and she saw him not.

Hitherto she had found D'Arcy her undeviating worshipper; to-day he seemed almost unconscious of her presence!

The door closed, and D'Arcy and Lord Stanmore were gone. Perhaps I shall never see him

again, thought Violet Woodville,—for, reader, have you never felt (that is, if you have ever loved) that in moments of despondency this strange idea has risen in your mind? It is but one of those spasms of a grieved heart that tears itself with every self-delusion. "My God! then I have dreamt it all, and he does not care for me!"

Violet would have cast away that thought, but it recurred continually, and at night in her dreams it lived.

Lord Stanmore and his friend walked on in silence, at least up one street, and then it was Lord Stanmore who spoke.

"D'Arcy, what can have happened?"

"What? to whom?"

"To her,—to Violet Woodville; she is altered; I find she is not the same person as when I left her."

"You mean, in her manner towards yourself?"

"Yes; I find I must either have been egregiously mistaken in her, or——"

"Or what?"

"Or that she is a thorough coquette, which I never can believe. Who in this world can one trust?" exclaimed the young man.

"You are speaking very solemnly; can it be possible that you are in love?"

"To distraction; and I do not care who knows it. Besides, I told you so long before."

"Yes, but I did not believe you, although now I do."

"And pray why *now?*"

"I can conceive it so very possible, for I am myself in love with Violet Woodville."

"You, D'Arcy! are you in earnest?"

"Yes, I think I am."

"What do you mean to do?"

"I was not sure whether through you I might not ascertain."

"Pshaw! you did not show any signs of caring for her during our visit."

"No; I thought I would give you a fair chance, as I have been able to make play during your absence. Not much, though; the father or mother, or that cursed old Frenchman, are always there; and you know, Stanmore, what an obliging fellow I can be to a friend that I like as yourself. So you got on ill with her this morning?"

"Devilish ill, I think, or she is changed; she was absent. Who has been making a fool of her while I have been away?"

"They have all been trying it; but I declare I cannot exactly say who our rival is."

"*Our!* you need not say our—I do not believe you are thinking of her."

"On my word I am. Why not?"

"I conceived you to be otherwise engaged; besides, she is not in your line."

"Oh," said D'Arcy, "but she is handsome enough for anything, and my heart is capacious."

"How I always hate your cold answers, D'Arcy. I am desperately in love with that girl," exclaimed Lord Stanmore passionately, and he stamped with his foot on the pavement.

"You will succeed with her at last, perhaps,—don't knock down that old barrow woman."

"Ah! I am not likely now; and those spies always about her, too."

"*They* would like you to marry her."

"Which, of course, I shall not do."

"I see you thought I expected you to say you would," answered D'Arcy, laughing aloud.

"No; and you need not laugh again in your vile way. But I do love her with all my soul; is she not a little divinity? But, D'Arcy, if you are so in love, why do not you go to the Opera to-morrow night?"

"Oh! that was still to give you an opportunity of making up for lost time. And so, Stanmore, you do not think she likes you now?"

"No; she used, or something like it. Can it be Goring? He is such a brute she would only hate him. But I will see her again; and I will watch,—I will find out,—there is nothing I will not do."

"Well, shall I see you at Crockford's to-night?"

"I think not; I am too unhappy, and altogether——"

Here Lord Stanmore and D'Arcy parted; the latter walked on with a light step, and was soon out of sight, while the young Peer proceeded more slowly in another direction.

Violet remained a prey to vexation of spirit. "How untrue to say youth is the happiest season of our life, with its keen feelings laying themselves so bare to the vulture, experience. Youth is a season that has no repose *," we feel so acutely then, and every petty grief cuts like a sharpened razor.

Violet could not recover from D'Arcy's altered manner, and his declaration that he was not going to the Opera. She asked herself a hundred times, was he changed? Or, (the supposition flashed horribly across her,) had all D'Arcy's apparent liking merely been an interest, the source

* L. E. L.

of which was in his friendship for her known admirer, Lord Stanmore? And now was he only desiring to promote the success of his friend?

If the supposition was far-fetched it was not unnatural, for love is so feeble in its judgments, so wonderful in its mental devices, so erring in its weaknesses, so bitter in its imaginings, so cruel in its suspicions, so unjust in its reasonings, so sublime in its folly, so partial in its arguments, and so ingenious in its self-torture, that there can be no limits to its inconsistency or to its doubts, and the power of the understanding sinks beneath the force of that single passion, even while its strength is weak.

Or, can I have offended him, thought Violet? wronging her gentle heart with the idea.

The morning following this inauspicious visit was a bright day in August, and we all know the relief given to the spirits by obtaining fresh air and exercise; so Violet was not less ready than usual to set forth upon her morning walk with Mrs. Hummings. She intuitively desired by any means to dissipate her uncomfortable feelings. Every day and every hour that she had spent with D'Arcy, since the time she first knew him, had been conjured up by memory to soothe her

grief, and to convince herself that D'Arcy's conduct must have been unintentional.

She proceeded along the straight walk by the elm trees in Kensington Gardens, without the spirits to explore the more intricate paths, as she sometimes did, enjoying with childish gaiety the freshness and the verdure.

Violet walked on slowly and in reverie, and Mrs. Hummings felt hardly more at ease than her young mistress, and secretly hoped that something would prevent Mr. d'Arcy from keeping his determination of meeting them; but the hope was hardly born in the tender bosom of Hummings, ere it was cruelly killed, by the appearance of D'Arcy walking quickly towards them.

When Violet saw him, she could scarcely believe her eyes,—but he approached. "How singular," she thought, "that he should be going this way, and at this hour,—as if it was really on purpose that I might see him! At all events, he must speak to me,—I shall have that pleasure," —and with this conclusion her young heart bounded with joy: so when D'Arcy held out his hand, and smiled, it might be, more gravely than usual, but still with his accustomed tenderness,

Violet felt only too happy, and her delight shone with exquisite truth in her lovely countenance!

"Le sentiment vif court, tant que l'on vent les risques de l'illusion, et s'il se trompe quelquefois, il a aussi senti en récompense, et exprimé pour ainsi dire de l'objet qui lui est presenté, tout ce qu'il pouvoit avoir de touchant.*"

"I am so surprised to see you! where were you going?" inquired Violet Woodville, with bashful artlessness.

"I had no object except one," replied D'Arcy, "I have but one in the world *now* I think, of any kind,—may I walk on with you? Tell me, if you would rather that I did not."

"No,—no,"—stammered Violet; not very conscious what she ought to reply. "But shall I turn, as I met you going in the opposite direction?"

"I *was,* Miss Woodville," answered D'Arcy, with emphasis.

"But if I knew your way,—the one you wished to go,—I would so much rather,—I mean just as soon walk that way as this;" Violet spoke with some confusion.

"It is the same to me. I came here but for

* Portrait de Madame de Flamorens.

the purpose of meeting you; did you actually suppose my coming here was accidental?"

"Indeed I did, Mr. d'Arcy. I could not tell that you desired to—to—to see me, at so early an hour,—and besides———"

"And besides; well, you do not continue?"

"And besides, I knew that you would call, if you wished to see us."

"Yes; but in calling I could not have seen you alone, and the *gêne* of never doing so is insupportable to me,—I find I can bear it no longer!"

Violet turned her head in the direction of Mrs. Hummings, but she found her duenna had unaccountably lingered some paces behind.

"Listen to me," said D'Arcy, impatiently, "do not look after that ugly old woman. Oh, listen to me for this once, at least,—I would give so much for one word of kindness from you,—for one word only, Miss Woodville,—will you listen to me if I tell you?"

"I do not know what you are going to say," exclaimed Violet, blushing. "But another time, not now,—I believe I ought to be going home."

"The vain excuse!—Yes, now it shall be,—but you well know—you must long have seen it. I

shall say nothing that could surprise you,—and yet"——D'Arcy paused, and appeared to reflect.

Reader, I know not why he hesitated, nor can I guess at the nature of his reflections. He spoke again after a few seconds, and bending over the castdown eyes of Violet, he uttered, with a tone of humbleness, and of dejection too: "I was going to tell you,—as I do now,—that I love you!"

At least, there is one word in the English language that has music in its sound,—Love! Who can pronounce it, and not say it is a gentle word, soft and beautiful as its meaning? Oh! breathe it how, and when, and where you will, is it not always a touching word? and, should it be uttered by one whose affection we delight in, it is a dream of bliss to hear it, and one that will be unforgotten while every other joy lies buried beneath the sorrow that fails us not: covering with its heavy mantle the happy hours that have gone before. But, as first uttered by a loved being, the memory of that word will endure.

It may be heard again and again, yet will not half its charm be the hope of once more feeling the magic pleasure its sound at first conveyed? Oh no, those feelings we can never know

twice, whether they are called into being in the spring of life, or in later years, it matters not.

Violet Woodville made no reply to D'Arcy, but she hung down her head, and blushed deeply. D'Arcy watched her in silence. At length he whispered, "Am I not to hear one word from you, —you surely are not offended with me?—you cannot be; and the declaration of a great affection, be it from whom it may, can merit no despisal."

"Alas!" said Violet, with an unequal voice, "if I knew but what to answer, Mr. d'Arcy!"

In his heart, D'Arcy felt how much more these guileless words conveyed than their speaker imagined.

"Tell me, at least, that you believe me!"

"Even that I cannot do. I have been so taught to disbelieve all such professions, that how am I to know yours are more to be relied on than others'?"

"To whom would you compare me?" exclaimed D'Arcy. "To the tribe who haunt you? who admire you, I grant,—but admiration is not love; —you do not think that one of all those men feels towards you as I do? or is it possible that you can do me the injustice of thinking so?"

"But then, Mr. d'Arcy, what is the reply you desire me to make? do you wish me to declare that I suddenly place faith in you—and on your simple showing?—rest convinced henceforth, that you do———love me."

"Say it, oh say! you believe that I do!"

Violet shook her head.

"I see it all," cried D'Arcy, his countenance darkening. "There is another person who might have made this declaration, and it would then have been more acceptable."

"On my word you are wrong," said Violet Woodville, vehemently, "there is no one in the world I care for in the sense you mean."

"Not even Stanmore, I suppose?" her lover ironically demanded.

"No, Mr. d'Arcy, not even Lord Stanmore."

"At all events you hate me?"

"Oh no!"

"Oh no," said D'Arcy, repeating her words in the softest tone of his musical voice, "but since you will not believe I love you, why should I believe that you do not hate me?"

"At all events, you did not even like me yesterday," Violet replied, partly in the endeavour to lead the conversation into another strain.

"You would not speak to me, Mr. d'Arcy," and she coloured violently.

D'Arcy answered readily, by quoting the beautiful old verses of Sir Walter Raleigh.

"Wrong not, sweet mistress of my heart,
The merit of true passion,
With thinking that he feels no smart
Who sues for no compassion.

"Since if my plaints were not t' approve
The conquest of thy beauty,
It comes not from defect of love,
But fear t' exceeding duty.

"For, knowing that I sue to serve
A saint of such perfection,
As all desire, but none deserve,
A place in her affection,

"I rather choose to want relief,
Than venture the revealing;
Where glory recommends the grief,
Despair disdains the healing."

"You have a good memory, Mr. d'Arcy; are you fond of poetry?"

"No—yes,—we will not discuss that now; and will you not vouchsafe me one word of kindness?"

Violet was silent,—she at last replied, but it was with an effort—"I wish to say nothing that is ungracious to you, Mr. d'Arcy, but since you call upon me for my sentiments, may I not tell you that if you do, as you say, love me—would

not the best proof of it have been to have avoided the conversation you have now begun? It must end here,—I am quite aware that it ought to do so."

Violet spoke with a quivering lip. She knew not how her words might be taken by D'Arcy, and she dreaded to offend him, as we ever dread to offend everything we love,—nor could she love the less for being so lately told she was beloved.

"I have said nothing that is disrespectful to you, Miss Woodville," replied D'Arcy, with gentleness, "that, at least, I am incapable of. But I did not think I should find you the one who would receive with coldness the avowal of a true affection. I have not asked you to return it,—I am conscious, alas! that I have no right to do so; but your pity I had hoped for,—and if you did but know what it is to love, and to love as I do, you would not thus have denied it to me. It was all I hoped to obtain from you. Others may be more fortunate than I can be,—they may win the heart whose slightest wish I could kneel to listen to. I have not known you long; but from the hour I first saw you I was touched by you. I admired your excessive beauty, and wondered at its perfection; then I heard you speak, and as I grew to you I became fascinated. At first I

despised myself for my folly, for so I thought it; and, until I met with you, I never conceived that I could feel for any living being as I do towards you. You treat me with indifference,—well, be it so,—I cannot care the less for you; and could I serve you I would lay down my life to do it. I am most unhappy; and, on my honour, I have not uttered one word that is not true."

"I am flattered," said Violet, "that you should think it worth your while to tell me this; and if you do—if you do love me, as you desire me to believe,—you can understand that, as I never can return your affection, it is better for me to avoid the possibility of being led to do so."

"There is no danger of that, Miss Woodville."

"I know not, and it is better, therefore, to think no more of it."

"Yes; but, as far as I am concerned, that is not done so easily,—and I really cannot see, while others are allowed to say all that I have said to you, why I am to be made the exception?"

"But others do not say to me what you have said, at least never with my permission."

"Not Lord Stanmore, for instance?"

"Again! not even Lord Stanmore."

"You will not tell me that you do not know that he is in love with you?"

"But that I cannot help; what I mean is, that he has no opportunity of telling me so that my parents could disapprove of."

"Well, I see that I have nothing to hope for. You will have many admirers, Miss Woodville, I do not doubt; but you may believe me when I say that mine is a better love than theirs. I would have devoted myself to you—I should have prized you more than anything that exists in the world: and could I have met from you with but the slightest kindness, I think I could have lived for years on the bare recollection of it, and should have gloried in proving that my words have not deceived you, and that mine was an undying affection. As it is, I wish to spare myself further pain—I shall shortly leave England, and it will be for years."

Violet turned very pale, but she made no answer.

"When I return, be it when it may, or it may never be—the bitterest recollection I shall have ever known will await me—of one whose affection, whose pity, I sued for in vain: and no term of years, and no absence, will efface from my memory the force of my feelings, or how my soul could have clung to loving the only thing I ever looked on and found no fault in."

"Why do you intend to remain so long abroad?" asked Violet with a faltering voice.

"Circumstances might oblige me, but independently of them, I solemnly declare to you, that you, and you alone, are the charm that makes me care for anything, even to live! I am old of my age, sometimes I am sick of life, and the beautiful part of human nature has been hidden from me. I have known misfortune, I have endured vexation of spirit, I have lived to despise the world; above all, I have lived to doubt that one good and pure being existed in it; and then I met with you, and was forced to own such a one did exist. Your beauty and your artless character attracted me till I grew to love you, and madly. I have thought of you till I have conceived it to be all a wild dream, and that I had fancied it, but I saw you again, and you looked more beautiful. I heard your voice, and I heard your guileless, unspotted mind in the tones of that voice, as I saw it, too, in your speaking countenance, and worlds, had I possessed them, I would have laid at your feet!

"I grew to fear you, and I dared not tell you of my love. I sometimes thought you were a hallowed creature, and longed to worship you. Now I have told you all, and you have repulsed

me. I did not know before how horrible it is to cast one's all of happiness upon a die and to lose it. While I have life I shall love you, and on earth I may never see you again!" D'Arcy stopped and held out his hand to bid her adieu.

Violet took it and burst into tears.

"Why, why do you shed tears?" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"I cannot bear you to leave England, Mr. d'Arcy," exclaimed Violet almost convulsively, as she wiped away the glittering drops.

"Never! I never will, if you will tell me to stay," he vehemently answered.

"Oh, no, not for me, not on my account," continued Violet almost inarticulately; "but do not go abroad, unless you must, pray do not."

"I would sooner die than do it now," exclaimed D'Arcy. "You are agitated—lean on me;" and he drew her arm through his, and neither of them seemed to remember that a Mrs. Hummings drew breath in the world.

"Oh, Mr. d'Arcy," said Violet, a little come to herself; "what I said was very foolish; I had no business to say it—you had better forget it."

"Forget it! I could not if I would. Do not be so ungenerous; grant me to live through one day, at least. I am but your slave—I never can

importune you; and I would hide myself from every living thing sooner than annoy you. You have but to say the word, and I will still disappear from your sight for ever. But now, have patience with me. I am happier at this moment than I have been for years!" And Violet could hardly doubt that D'Arcy spoke the truth, for he looked so happy, and that was not his general expression.

The lovers walked on conversing till they reached the opposite gate. D'Arcy's respectful manner disarmed her of all mistrust, and, in spite of herself, Violet felt a joy she had never known in her life before.

"And to-night I shall not see you, and it is your last night," said D'Arcy, alluding to the Opera of that evening.

"Where shall you be?" inquired Violet.

"I have an engagement to go twenty miles from town with Lord ——, the Minister for the Home Department. It is important for me to keep the engagement; nothing, in fact, but necessity would make me give up the pleasure of seeing you to-night: as it is, I have not much chance of it, as I have to speak to Lord —— on business, and shall be detained, or I could still go to ————, and find myself in the Opera in

time for the last act of the ballet. To-morrow I shall call at your house, if Mrs. Woodville is not informed of our meeting this morning; she will not think my visit is made so very much too soon."

"But how is mamma not to know of my meeting with you?"

"She cannot unless you tell her; and surely that is not necessary; it would only occasion remarks, and for once there can be no objection to its not being known. But do as you judge best," added D'Arcy.

"But," said Violet, "there is Hummings, who will think it so odd; and there is something so disgraceful in having anything to conceal from papa or mamma—I cannot bear it!"

"Then tell Mrs. Woodville of our meeting. I advised you not, because I know what mammas are, and that yours is not aware that I am not like Goring, or any of those men whom it would not be so well for you to be on the same terms with. I myself should be wretched if you were. But your parents will not make the distinction; and I flatter myself that you, at least, think I deserve that you should have perfect confidence in me."

"And I have, Mr. d'Arcy. But there is still

Hummings; she may speak of our walking together?"

"No, I think not—no, I am sure she will not. The truth is," continued D'Arcy, smiling, "I so wish to call upon you; and I fear, if, in addition to our walk to-day, I venture to appear in your house to-morrow, I shall be forbidden to do so ever again . . . . . Shall I not?" asked D'Arcy, as he took and pressed the little hand of poor Violet, while he regarded her beseechingly to acquiesce.

Violet sighed: she felt there was something wrong in her conduct; but D'Arcy's arguments prevailed, and she agreed to conceal their having walked together.

No sooner had they parted, and she was slowly returning homewards, than she repented her agreement; but her mind was in a tumult of emotion, and hardly any idea was defined enough to become the one uppermost.

At one moment she was seized with the most poignant regret at having asked D'Arcy not to leave England; and felt she could do, or endure, anything to have the power of recalling her words.

"And what must it have made him think of me?" inwardly exclaimed Violet; and her deli-

cacy shrunk with dismay from this avowal of her feelings towards D'Arcy. Then, again, the idea rose in her mind, that had it been otherwise, she might have bade him an eternal adieu; and that, to a heart such as hers, was a thought too overwhelming in its misery. Sooner than that—sooner than part from D'Arcy, Violet would have given up her life, her happiness, her honour—no; that last sacrifice did not occur to her; or, if it did, it was so vaguely and so seemingly impossible, that it passed through her mind quicker than the bird of the ocean flies over its waves. She did not question the force of D'Arcy's love; she did not fathom the depth of her own; still she was aware that all this could have no good end, and felt a consciousness of future sorrow, and a dread of the day's coming when he must be taken from her. Then, again, Violet remembered that she was beloved by D'Arcy, and brooded over that conviction in silent happiness.

Suddenly she began to wonder what construction Mrs. Hummings had put upon her meeting him, or whether she put any at all. She addressed her, and Mrs. Hummings, who was full of internal perplexity and uneasiness, answered submissively, and as if she were the culprit on

this occasion, as in fact, though unknown to her mistress, she was.

"I think," said Mrs. Hummings, "it is of no use of our saying to your mamma or pa' of our a-meeting with Mr. d'Arcy; they may not desire as you should see him; and if you don't say nothing on it, I am sure I sha'n't think on it, Miss."

"Very well, Hummings," answered Violet, with an averted face, for her conscience would allow her to say no more; and she reached her home without again speaking to her attendant.

CHAPTER VII.

"Beauty lures the full-grown child:
* * * * *
A chace of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
The lovely toy, so fiercely sought,
Hath lost its charm in being caught;
For every touch that wooed its stay
Has brushed its brightest hues away,
Till, charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'Tis left to fly or fall alone."

BYRON.

"SHE is the finest creature I ever saw!" cried Lord Z——, as he surveyed Violet Woodville through his opera-glass.

The ballet had commenced, and Violet was dancing. "Astonishing! So much grace!—'Pon my soul, she is lovely, Goring!"

"Oh, yes; but it's no use—she wants the ring."

"Is it true that Stanmore marries her?"

"No—I asked him; he turned sulky upon it; but swore it was not true. They say D'Arcy is the favourite."

"Oh, oh!—so he finds time for that, too, does he! How she has filled the house this season;

and it is mere grace, excessive grace, and excessive beauty; for she does no *tours de force*, and her dancing is nothing compared with that of Heberlé and Montessu. She is really divine to-night. I should not wonder if Staunore was fool enough to marry her—except that, in general, he is a clever fellow, I think."

It was true that Violet never performed her part with more spirit, and never looked more beautiful. Her mind was yet joyful, and full of the impressions of the morning. At night, particularly, and in a scene of excitement, we remember with tenfold pleasure that which has pleased us, and we do so then without dwelling on the possibly attendant evils, however they may occur to us at another time. Violet was not without some of the natural pride belonging to her sex, and she was, in fact, more gratified on this night by the homage paid to her, than she had ever felt before. She knew she was handsome; but she was only vain when she thought of D'Arcy's intense admiration; and his praise had made an impression upon her self-love, which the unceasing compliments of every man who addressed her had hitherto failed to effect.

One of the best boxes on the second tier was occupied by a single person, a young man; the

curtain occasionally concealed his face, but generally there was something interesting in his close attention to the stage. His eyes wandered not from it, and the white-gloved hand, that rested on the edge of the box, was never moved except to convey the opera-glass to his eyes. Not once did he glance round the house, and the somewhat melancholy expression of his finely-cut profile remained undisturbed throughout the evening. Lord Stanmore,—for he it was,—appeared conspicuous from the house not being full. The season had drawn to its close.

There he sat, while to an observer his countenance betrayed a mind preyed upon by unpleasant reflections. It was not that he was moralizing; but it did strike him, as he gazed steadfastly at the beautiful opera-dancer, that it would be sad if a spoiler should come to blight the innate excellence of one so fair. And himself? Was it not his aim? had it not become his sole desire? But then rose up the melancholy conviction that the heart he had thus guiltily sought to win was not for him; either it never had been, or it had proved incredibly fickle.

"If she did but love me," said Lord Stanmore to himself, "I should be happy. She may be virtuous, and I know she is; but so sweet a dis-

position must err through its own tenderness,—and was it another who would be her seducer?" Lord Stanmore would not think it possible; he quailed under the supposition, and found himself muttering "The success of such black villainy would be incredible. It is a sacrilege to think she could be so debased;" he involuntarily exclaimed, as the loud plaudits of the pit woke him from the deep reverie in which the nature of his ideas had absorbed him.

It is of no use to say that the profession of an opera-dancer is a modest one; but it is fair to remember that to those who fulfill it it does not appear so immodest as to the spectator. From childhood they have been taught to look upon it professionally, and they grow up, seeing it in no other light. And thus it was with Violet: she disliked her profession, but it was D'Arcy who had led her to despise it.

She was quoted for the dignified modesty of her demeanour upon the stage; and it was remarkable how strongly her native character developed itself even there: the propriety of her demeanour had not failed to call forth merited surprise from many; in Lord Stanmore's eyes it was one of Violet's greatest charms.

On the night in question, probably because it

was the last of her appearance, she was certainly more applauded than usual.

Violet felt, during some moments, a thrill of happiness almost too great to endure: it was when her eye fell upon D'Arcy, as he entered a box upon the same side as that of Lord Stanmore. He was in evident haste as he advanced to the front, and remained almost bending over the box, as if he never could sufficiently behold the goddess of the night. He was just in time; three minutes more, and the curtain dropped, and Violet's last vision was the admiring eyes of D'Arcy, as they sought her to the latest instant.

Violet never dressed at the Opera. She was on that night solely under the care of M. Dupas, and when the ballet was over, had nothing to do but to throw on her cloak and get into the hired carriage which was waiting for her. She reached home before she had recovered from the unhoped-for pleasure of seeing D'Arcy. He must have made such haste to have been in time! It was twenty miles off where he dined.

M. Dupas descended from the carriage to assist his young charge in getting out, but the trouble was saved him, for another person lent her his aid.

"At least I have seen you," said a beloved

voice; and Violet's hand was wrung by the pressure of D'Arcy's, and before she had recovered from her surprise, her lover had rapidly moved away. She flew to her room, it looked upon the street; to throw up her window, and to look out for D'Arcy was the work of an instant, but the light of the moon only discovered a solitary policeman, and the white reins of a cabriolet, as it turned the corner. Violet waited for the last sound of the wheels before she closed the window. She wondered whether M. Dupas had recognized D'Arcy. It was not a very clear night, and he was hidden by his cloak and a hat slouched over his features.

It was late when Violet came down to breakfast next morning, but this was a privileged adjournment.

Mr. Woodville was gone out, and Mrs. Woodville was engaged; still the apartment was not untenanted: M. Dupas was sitting there, with his legs crossed, and his eyes turned thoughtfully upwards, as if watching the summer flies gathering upon the ceiling; and he looked graver than he did in general.

M. Dupas had been handsome, at least his features indicated that he must have been so; and when excited his countenance became very

animated, like that of most French people; but when this was not the case, his face was placid, and rendered pleasing by an expression of extreme benevolence. He was in fact a remarkable man for his age, which was rarely guessed, because his activity and neatness of dress made him pass for a much younger man.

His known worth, and their long acquaintance with him, caused him to be respected and looked up to by the Woodvilles; besides, independence of fortune always renders a man dearer to his friends, and it has before been said that Dupas was well off. By Violet he was loved: as a child he used to give her sugar-plums and story-books, and once had brought her from France a pair of blue shoes, which made a great impression on her. Then, as she grew up, she was often amused by him, for his conversation was entertaining, and through him Violet often heard of people and events of which she would otherwise have known nothing.

This morning Violet was not as glad as usual to behold M. Dupas. She would have preferred being alone,—so many ideas were crowding upon her, and she was seeking to indulge them.

Love, when it gains possession of the mind, is like a bee in a garden; it is ever at work; and its

restlessness, like that of the insect, never leaves an unbusy moment.

Violet sat down to her breakfast, and then M. Dupas inquired if she was not much fatigued; she answered languidly in the affirmative. The old man remained silent. Violet walked presently to the window and made some remark on the weather, but received no answer.

M. Dupas appeared absent; he tapped the lid of his gold snuff-box, and Violet said something else; instead of replying, her companion cast a look at the breakfast-table, at the broken bread on Miss Woodville's plate, and her half-finished cup of tea, and sighed, but at the same time he turned to address her.

"Will you let me give you advice, *un vieillard comme moi*, while it can be of use to you, *mon enfant*?" he said mildly. Violet took the chair he advanced to her, but she almost trembled.

"Do not let me vex you, *Violette*, you will have trouble enough in the world without my adding to it; but advice is of use, sometimes. I wish you were my own child, and there would be no occasion for it; but it is pride in this country turns the heads of the women and the men too. Your father and madame, they wish you to be the wife of a gentleman, and they do not think anybody

else good enough for you; who is not some one, it is no use to think of. C'est un mauvais système, bien mauvais. But it is very true; and there is Mrs. Norris and your friend Emily, are they not trying all in the power of two silly women to make a young gentleman do that which it is not right he should? Ce Monsieur Harcourt, that he should marry Mdlle. is Madame Norris's *Paradis en perspective,* and for that she would sell herself to the devil! *Je vous demande pardon, mais toujours c'est vrai;* and does not she know that if he does marry Miss Emily, some of these days he will find out he has been *un imbécile,* and hate her and her daughter too when it will be too late? *Les mésalliances ne réussissent jamais.*

"Now I will tell you why I say all this to you; it is because that *Madame votre mère* does not know what I do, nor *Monsieur votre père* neither, and you do not see your own danger, and that, my child, is what I wish to warn you of. Is it not so, that your parents think that Lord Stanmore will marry you, that you do not care in the least for him, and that you do care very much for Mr. d'Arcy? *Et lui*—Et-ce que vous pensez qu'il vous épousera?"

"No," answered Violet as steadily as she

could; "no, he is above me, and I should not desire it."

"Ah! then why is Mr. d'Arcy always calling here? why is Mr. d'Arcy always at the Opera? why is he always talking to you? why does he follow you everywhere? why is he the *dévoué* of madame, your mamma? why is he, at two in the morning, to be standing with his white gloves, and his whispering words at your father's door, to hand you into your father's house? No, no, it is all bad. But the difference is, you are not in love with *Milord*, and with Mr. d'Arcy you are. And has he not found that out, or will he not do so? and then—*Oh, mais cela me fait horreur—N'importe*, I will say out to you what is the truth. When he asks you to be his mistress, what will you feel?"

Violet hid her face in her hands, while she almost screamed out, "Never, oh, never, never; Mr. d'Arcy never would; you do not know him, he is incapable, indeed he is."

"Eh, *y pensez-vous mon enfant?*" answered M. Dupas drily.

"But he is a man of honour!"

"Ah! *c'est selon*," replied her companion, shrugging his shoulders. "*Il le croit, je ne m'en*

doute pas. But he has fallen in love with you; he knows you are not of an equal rank with himself—he will not marry you, he *cannot;* but that, he says, *c'est votre affaire, et voilà pourquoi moi, moi, je me mêle de tout cela. Vous ne m'en voulez pas, ma douce enfant?*"

"Oh, no," answered Violet, overcoming her emotion; "you have meant it well; but can you conceive it possible I could ever forget everything so as to become so degraded a creature? Oh, it is too horrible!"

"*Vous me mepreneż*," said M. Dupas; "if you think I can doubt the purity of my little Violet's heart—no, not in the least; but the world is full of temptation. Yet that is not what I fear; no. I shall never live to see the little child—you, my little darling, that I have seen growing up, and that I have taught myself—I never shall see you disgraced, I am sure of it. But there it is; Mr. d'Arcy will find he can make you love him, but that he cannot make you wicked—*et alors il s'en ira*—and then will his heart or yours be the one to break;—his that is full of pride, though he does not think we see it:—with his *manières à l'eau sucrée* to *Madame, et les bouquets qu'il apporte.* Bah! *lui, il se consolera* with his fine ladies and his fine friends. *Et à vous,—reste le*

souvenir de ses belles paroles! You will be unhappy, he will not—*ce n'est pas à savoir cela.*" And M. Dupas had again recourse to his snuff-box and to his shrug, while Violet sighed deeply.

At length she summoned courage to ask if he had any positive reason for thinking ill of D'Arcy. He shook his head, and replied ambiguously;—that he had lived long enough in the world to be wiser than she was; and that he had seen enough of Mr. d'Arcy to feel certain he was not a good acquaintance for Violet. He went on to say, that evil, in some way, was sure to result from her intimacy with him,—that the refinement of D'Arcy's manners, and the outward polish of his affection, would prevent her ever being able to return that of a poorer, and more suitable admirer. Violet replied that the same objection might be made to so many other gentlemen who had made her acquaintance. "Yes; but it is not the same thing: as long as you do not care about them, it does not matter,—you don't feel their advantages, and you do not value them. But Mr. D'Arcy's? *en perdez-vous un seul?*"

In her heart, Violet could not deny the force of the argument, but it was one the least likely to make an useful impression. She could only promise to remember all M. Dupas had said,—

she thanked him, and ventured to beg he would not alarm her parents on this point.

"*Soyez tranquille,*" said the old man. "But you I warn,—that your mother hopes Lord Stanmore will marry you, and that if he does not, Mr. d'Arcy will; and your father sees as Madame does, or, at least, acts as she desires he should, in every thing; *ce n'est pas être clairvoyant,*" he added; "*mais c'est le défaut d'un cœur généreux.*"

It may be supposed that D'Arcy did not fail to call as he had told Violet, in their morning walk, he meant to do; and he chose the time when he felt certain of finding Mrs. Woodville at home, and less sure of finding Mr. Woodville. D'Arcy had ingratiated himself with the former; he had the art of pleasing where he desired to do so. He flattered her by his air of deference, and by his knowledge of the world, which had likewise enabled him to discover the vulnerable parts of her character. She was more anxious about, and desirous of Lord Stanmore's society, but there were no personal feelings blended with this solicitude. Lord Stanmore paid attention solely to her daughter; his civility was always reserved towards Mrs. Woodville, and nothing more, whereas D'Arcy had in some way enlisted her private sympathy in his favour.

To be sure, the Woodvilles never were in want of marks of attention from their friends. The day seldom passed without some such arrival as pine-apples from Lord X——; salmon from Mrs. C——; American apples, or a haunch of venison from B——, or A——; and endless tin boxes of violets, and bouquets of moss-roses for Mrs. and Miss W.; and, in the game season, their supplies of partridges, &c. were incessant: besides other sorts of birds with rare names, odd plumage, and lean bodies, which cooks think it felony not to send to table half raw. In short, none of the gallantries of this nature, which it was permitted to remember and to fulfill, were ever forgotten by the numerous admirers of the lovely Miss Woodville.

But to return to D'Arcy. He did not pay his visit alone this time; he requested permission to introduce an acquaintance who was passing that way with him. Violet remarked nothing more peculiar in D'Arcy's companion, than that he had not the usual tone of the men she was accustomed to, and that he never took his eyes from off her countenance; while she could not help fancying that she had before encountered his observation.

D'Arcy, meanwhile, was asking the Woodvilles

to join a party to Richmond, for the following Sunday week. Mrs. Woodville was nothing loth; the rest of the party were not as yet fixed upon; D'Arcy said it was to be very select; and he had come in the first instance to ascertain if the day he had named would suit them.

While D'Arcy was in the house, another cabriolet drew up at the door, and Lord Stanmore entered the room. On seeing D'Arcy, he started slightly, and changed colour. If D'Arcy did the same, he was seated with his back to the light, and it was not observable.

Violet remained almost immovable from embarrassment, for she did not possess one grain of coquetry: if she had, the circumstance of two lovers paying their visits at the same time would have been to her only an agreeable disturbance.

There was a silence, which D'Arcy was the first to break. Lord Stanmore looked gravely at him while he spoke, and did not once address himself to him. A constrained sort of general conversation ensued. Lord Stanmore's countenance indicated an irritation which, by his manner, he made a poor attempt to conceal; and now Mrs. Woodville began to feel uneasy. She would not, for the whole world, offend Lord

Stanmore; and she feared lest he should be jealous of D'Arcy,—that he had much cause to be so was a fact she was herself in ignorance of. Lord Stanmore rose suddenly to bid them good morning, and in the next minute his cabriolet was heard driving furiously from the door. D'Arcy and his acquaintance shortly after took their leave.

* * * * * * * *

"Your objections are plausible, but surely they are not reasonable. The laws of society are strict in themselves, but there may be many instances in which, if the spirit of them is kept, it is more than sufficient. The world requires this sort of social government, which, individually, might often be dispensed with. I am hurt at the rigorous discipline you would impose, since it discovers your mistrust of me. The doctrines of a prude can never become yours, and you are too inartificial ever to feign to like them, while your understanding convinces you that they are unnecessary."

So spoke D'Arcy, in answer to the refusal of Violet Woodville to meet him again in Kensington Gardens. She urged that, as she was concealing her meetings with him, that alone ren-

dered them objectionable; and that, in future, therefore, she trusted he would not join her. But D'Arcy replied with other arguments, and combated hers with all the sophistry he knew how to employ.

Violet felt it difficult to persevere in a resolution he treated as originating in a mistaken zeal of over-correctness, and she thought that, as he spoke, she detected a sneer on D'Arcy's lips, and that cold smile hovering there which she now so rarely beheld.

There was once, too, something like contempt in the tones of his voice, and the fear of offending him induced her, at length, to acquiesce in his reasoning. Violet began to think that he, at least, was sincere in the view he professed to take of the conduct she desired to pursue, and, if so, to adopt it would be unappreciated as well as displeasing.

"Il n'est pas de plus fort préjugé que celui qui est formé par l'amour."*

And then again she was lulled by the flattering words of her adorer, and in listening to

> "a voice where Passion shed
> All the deep sadness of her power,"

while he detailed the progress of his love, and

* Mémoires du Marquis de Langallery.

descanted on the earnestness of his feelings, she alike forgot her danger and mistook her duty.

D'Arcy was an eloquent and a passionate lover, but it cannot be doubted that the force of his words gained additional strength by the inward acceptance they met with. An unacceptable lover might pour out his soul in the language Moore puts into the mouths of his angels, but it would fall unheeded on the ear of the indifferent listener.

"And so," said Emily one day to Violet, "it is clear enough you are in love with D'Arcy;" and Emily remained musing, apparently on the sense of her own words.

The habits of intimacy continued to prevail between Miss Woodville and her friend, and the faults of the latter were not so glaring as to have much deteriorated their mutual friendship: besides, there was a certain talent about Emily, which had its charm with men and with women too. She was quick, and she was too young and prosperous to be under the guidance of very bad feelings.

It was a relief to the conscience of Violet when she had told Emily of her walks with D'Arcy, and had expressed her own sense of error.

"I am not so sure that you are wrong," replied Emily. "If you like him better than Lord Stanmore, I should certainly show him that I did. There is not time to be thinking always of what is so exactly right or so exactly wrong. There is no harm, that I can see, in your meeting D'Arcy when you are out walking; after all, you are chaperoned, there is that ugly old Hummings with you. It is very natural, I am sure. If he loves you, he must have a thousand things to say to you which he can seldom have so good an opportunity of speaking otherwise; and there is something,—do you know, Violet?—there is something I rather like about Mr. d'Arcy."

"There can be no doubt of my having done wrong, Emily," said Violet, with a sigh, and not alluding to Emily's last sentence; "my father would say so."

"I dare say he would; but, poor man, you must not mind that. As your father, you know he is, in some sort, bound to see you don't have lovers, and that sort of thing, too much; but there would be no pleasure in life if you were only to do what other people choose instead of what you choose yourself,—and parents don't understand. You are a nice girl, Violet, and I

will answer for your always knowing what you are about."

"Ah, Emily, that's the way you always reason; and my father and mamma, too, are so kind,—and I have actually begun to have a concealment from them!"

At night, when Violet was going to bed, Mrs. Hummings entered her room and placed a letter in her hands. She said it had been brought by a person, who desired her to give it to Miss Woodville when she was alone. Mrs. Hummings did not add that she was also paid for undertaking to do so. She suspected the letter came from D'Arcy, and her conscience was not much disturbed at being the channel of such a communication, as she argued that if her young mistress could take a walk with that gentleman in the morning, it could not do much harm if she read a letter from him in the evening. Mrs. Hummings, however, was mistaken: the letter was not from D'Arcy, but from Lord Stanmore.

It contained a passionate declaration of love to Violet, and ended by making her the most splendid offers of a disgraceful kind; but the letter was worded with the greatest delicacy, and with all the endeavour not to wound which such a

proposition would admit of. It concluded thus: "If what I have written avails me not, and if the pleadings of a very devoted heart are spurned by you,—while you censure me, consider that I am not more to blame than a thousand others; nay less, inasmuch as, having a consciousness how greatly I should appreciate the sacrifice you would make for me, I should feel bound to treat with a lasting tenderness the object of an affection so rewarded."

With indescribable anguish Violet threw down the letter. "And this, then," she exclaimed, "is all they think me worthy of. They profess to love, but hesitate not to insult me!"

She at first determined to make no answer, but, on reading over the epistle a second time, something in the spirit of it moved her to think differently. "He could not marry me, and in what he offers he is generous, most generous," thought Violet, humbly and despondingly; and a melancholy sense of humiliation stole over her. "It is not his fault. He does but think I may be one of the many, and he treats me accordingly. And D'Arcy,—if *he* should possibly think the same of me? Oh, I should go mad with horror. But *he* knows me. *He* respects me; *he* will not insult me—never—I am sure of that."

Violet seized a pen, and answered Lord Stanmore:—

"My Lord,—I cannot accept your offer. If you knew the cruel humiliation I have suffered in receiving a letter like yours, you would, I trust, have spared me.

"I am, my Lord,

"Yours sincerely and humbly,

"V. W."

Such was the reply of our heroine to Lord Stanmore, while she continued to meet D'Arcy nearly every morning in the Gardens.

She received another letter from Lord Stanmore: it was laconic:—

"Forgive me."

"Go with me to the rehearsal to-morrow, will you?" said Emily Norris to her friend one morning. "We are going to try over *Le faux Cupidon;* I have nearly forgotten it." Violet agreed to go, and told D'Arcy of her intention; he, of course, did not fail to join her on the stage at the time she went there. Violet was with Mrs. Norris, and it so happened that neither her father nor mother accompanied her.

"I had some difficulty in getting here," said

D'Arcy, laughing, and apparently in higher spirits than usual, as he took his post next Violet, who was leaning against one of the side boxes.

"How do you do, Mr. d'Arcy?" said a young lady, in a free and easy tone, in flesh-coloured silk stockings, a pair of corsets, and wearing about one petticoat and a half,—and holding out her hand familiarly to D'Arcy.

"Vous avez chaud, apparemment, ma chère;" said a gentleman, interrupting her, whose costume consisted of yellow slippers and white-cotton trowsers, with a pink silk handkerchief knotted round his throat.

"Get away,—you are jealous," cried D'Arcy's young lady.

"Pray let me give no cause for anxiety," said D'Arcy, moving away from the fair one and her friend.

"Come,—come,—so you won't speak to me to-day?' said the nymph, following our hero round the stage very closely. "I see you like that new Miss, there. Why she is not half so good as I, and she is proud, and you know I am not. Have done, Nicolas! why do you follow me so? You never let me speak to any one."

"*Vous êtes une perfide,*" whispered Nicolas,

the gentleman in white cotton; "*et je vous en payerai*," he added, making a most ferocious pair of eyes.

The lady replied by a laugh; and, following D'Arcy to the back of the stage, tried to take his arm. "Get away," cried D'Arcy, impatiently.

"Bless me," said the nymph, in surprise, real or apparent.—"Well, I see you don't want me; you ungrateful—you—"

"Allons, commençons," called a voice from the other end, and D'Arcy was liberated.

Violet could not help seeing what had passed; she knew the girl to be one of the figurantes, and one not of good character. She saw her, and others of her sort, often enough addressed by gentlemen, but this creature's familiar tone of speaking to D'Arcy shocked her particularly.

Mrs. Norris had taken a chair apart from all the other mammas and chaperones, and Violet screened herself behind her, to avoid associating, as much as possible, with her present set of acquaintance.

"*N'est-ce pas que ma Julie a des jambes superbes?*" said a respectable-looking old lady, with an air of modesty, to Mrs. Norris, who was forced to put up her glass to survey the said

"*jambes*" of Mdlle. Julie, while D'Arcy once more approached, to resume his station by Violet; but this time he was attacked by the same old lady who spoke to Mrs. Norris. "N'est-ce pas," said she, looking up benevolently in his face, "N'est-ce pas, Monsieur, que ma Julie est une brave fille?"

"Is it not dreadful the sort of people one is obliged to be civil to, Mr. d'Arcy?" Mrs. Norris pathetically asked; "for my part, I have a perfect horror of these sort of persons; I never speak to them unless I am absolutely forced."

"You seem bored," said D'Arcy, addressing Violet.

"I never like this place."

"And why, loveliest?"

Violet shrank from D'Arcy, almost for the first time in her life, for there was a levity in his tone she had never before detected.

"*Dois je commencer avec le commencement?*" called the fiddler. "*Oui,*" said Miss Norris, imperiously, while she began an arduous pirouette. About five bars were played over once again, while Nicolas, in the back ground, seemed exerting himself to perfect an elaborate battement with one ill-humoured leg.

"Listen to me, my soul's idol," said D'Arcy; "why are you so unkind to me this morning?"

"I am not unkind, Mr. d'Arcy."

"Yes, you are;—what have I done? tell me."

"Believe me when I say,—nothing."

At this moment D'Arcy's eye fell upon one of the side boxes: it was Lord Stanmore's, and in it, even by the imperfect lights of a rehearsal, D'Arcy saw Lord Stanmore himself. He was looking gloomily at Violet, and at his friend; Violet's attention was at the same moment drawn to him, and Lord Stanmore, seeing he was observed, quitted the box. Violet shuddered. "How great must be his contempt for me!" thought she; "and I merit it."

D'Arcy saw that her spirit was not at ease. "Her self-love is hurt," thought he, and he applied himself to dissipate the cloud, and he succeeded. He had some difficulty, however, in getting her to promise to meet him the next morning; this was not the first time she had resisted.

"Well," at length said D'Arcy, "for this once more you must meet me,—I have a reason for it. I have a picture I want you to see, and you must meet me to morrow, that I may show it to you."

The next morning, when Violet walked out to meet her lover, she was oppressed with a sense of doing wrong, and fully determined that it should afflict her for the last time; this, she resolved, should be effectually done by giving up her morning walks. She thought of what the future would then be, and it seemed a blank before her.

As it was only exposing herself to additional temptation, Violet wisely determined to say nothing about her resolve to D'Arcy, but her heart was sadder than she had ever felt it in her whole life.

"Look here," said D'Arcy, on joining her, "do you recognise this face?" showing her a small and beautifully painted miniature of a young girl in a morning out-of-doors dress. Violet started; it was herself in the attire she usually wore when she went out.

"How could you get this?" she inquired with surprise.

"I have had so great a desire to possess a good likeness of you, and I have so often regretted," continued D'Arcy, "that I could not ask you to sit for one. But, I believe, I have at last succeeded wonderfully in obtaining this. I

met with a clever artist, to whom I gave every opportunity of seeing you that I could think of. You must have passed him constantly of a morning when you have been coming here; he has been hovering on your steps for the last two months, and I seldom allowed a day to pass without paying a visit to the *atelier* of my artist friend, for such he has been to me. You may suppose that my corrections have done something towards the likeness. I brought him to your house the other day, too, and introduced him as an acquaintance who was walking with me."

"Good heavens!" said Violet, "so then that was the man who never took his eyes off me, and I really wondered what he could be looking at."

"His admiration of you was profound," said D'Arcy, "and to that I chiefly attribute the great success of my miniature. While I live I shall never part with it. You see I have had it made small on purpose, and the little gold case is the neatest in the world. I shall hang it round my neck,—here is the chain I shall put to it, and a ribbon also, for fear the chain should break."

"I hardly knew you cared so much for me as all that," said Violet, touched.

"Alas!" cried D'Arcy, with sudden emotion, "I wish that I had it more in my power to prove the excess of my affection."

"Allow me to say," said Violet, with agitation, "that I am quite aware I never can receive any further proofs of your affection for me. I am so aware of this," she continued, "that it would hurt me if you could imagine I should expect it: our situations in life are perfectly different, and to break through the restraints they impose would be a lasting error which I feel, were I in your place, I could not commit. I believe I am speaking with a frankness which is uncalled for, but you will not think it boldness."

"I understand you," answered D'Arcy, "and I admire you the more for what you have said. I will be sincere with you,—I once promised that I always would be. I cannot think of marrying,—my position in life is one that will not admit of it. Had I the largest fortune to-morrow, however, I should not marry, or if I did———"

D'Arcy paused and sighed. "I cannot say that I should not marry in that case,—but there is but one person I would ask to be my wife."

"And who would be that person, Mr. d'Arcy?"

"Yourself."

"Never," cried Violet, "never!—how can you so try to deceive me? nothing would induce you to marry an opera-dancer!"

"What can make you think so?" asked D'Arcy with surprise.

Violet related the conversation she had so long ago overheard between him and Mr. Harcourt.

"But still you underrate my great love for you," said D'Arcy: "it could lead me to overcome every prejudice."

"It *could*, but it *would not*," repeated Violet, steadily.

"You may be right," answered D'Arcy, after a moment's reflection. "But yet it is true that I have never once exaggerated the strength of my affection in all I have told you; more than that (believe me or not, as you choose), but there have been moments when I have endured the most poignant regret—regret?—yes, I have upbraided myself; but I do love you, may God bear witness, better than all things that are,—and I would give worlds—what am I saying?—oh, my very soul,—I would give it away, if———"

"You hesitate; I do not know what you are going to say, but leave it unsaid. I am unhappy enough as it is—so unhappy,—I see that I can never know happiness again,"—and Violet Woodville clasped her hands in deep sorrow; D'Arcy seized, and covered them with kisses,—while he almost knelt at her feet.

Hummings was a great way behind, but she hastened her pace now, and her approaching steps induced both Miss Woodville and D'Arcy to try to recover their composure.

Violet's determination of not meeting D'Arcy again was preying upon her mind, and she had the tenderness of her heart, as well as the deepness of its affection, to struggle with.

They came to the end of her usual walk in silence, and when Violet gave D'Arcy her hand to bid him farewell, her heart was too full to speak.

"I shall meet you at the Opera to-morrow; Mrs. Woodville told me she was going with you, but to-morrow morning we will talk of that: you will come here to-morrow morning?" whispered D'Arcy in an imploring voice: "ah, dearest, you will believe my very life is in your hands."

Violet could make no reply. When she was alone, her tears flowed long, and how sadly!

"Nos actions ne peuvent être appréciées par leur valeur intrinsèque non connue. La position qui les met au jour en décide le prix."*

* Madame de Staal de Launay.

CHAPTER VIII.

A savage jealousy that sometimes savours nobly.
TWELFTH NIGHT.

Oh, what a host of killing doubts and fears,
Of melancholy musings, deep perplexities,
Must the fond heart that yields itself to love
Struggle with, and endure!

LORD STANMORE went to Brighton, but, finding his mother really better than he had expected, he returned to town. It was, in some measure, curiosity that prompted him to do this, mingled with more unpleasant feelings. He was certain that the impression he once hoped to have made on Violet Woodville was at an end; at the same time he gave full credit to her upright mind; but he found he had a rival, and the observations of a week were sufficient to enable him to discover who that rival was. In his jealous anger, Lord Stanmore vowed never again to see D'Arcy. He avoided him therefore, for he felt he hated him. It was a chance thing his seeing him and

Violet at the rehearsal: he sometimes went to the rehearsal of an Opera, and a mistake as to the nature of this one was the reason of his coming to his box on the morning in question; and it was a moment of great pain when he there beheld Violet and his former friend.

He could have declared to all the world his conviction of Violet's hypocritical conduct, although, in fact, he refused to give it his own credence.

"Les amans portent quelquefois leur aveuglement jusqu'à ne pas connaître dans leurs maîtresses les défauts qu'ils savent bien en faire connaître aux autres.*"

On the last night of the Opera the Woodvilles took a box, or rather the manager very civilly gave them one; and Mrs. Woodville, without saying a word to Mr. Woodville or Violet, wrote a note to Lord Stanmore to inform him where they were going. Her excuse was, that he had once said something of her letting him know if they went to the Opera; and without this little arrangement on her part, Mrs. Woodville would have looked on the opera-box as a most vain acquirement.

* St. Evremond.

A sudden resolution prompted Lord Stanmore to avail himself of this information, or rather invitation. The overture was only just ended when, to the great surprise of Violet Woodville, he entered the box and seated himself by her. She was in the back, where her mother had placed her, because she thought, in case Lord Stanmore chose it, it would be giving him such a good opportunity of proposing to her. Poor Violet was thinking only of D'Arcy, and cared little where she sat.

The words of civility were no sooner passed and the Opera begun, than Lord Stanmore (his jealousy overcoming his embarrassment at seeing Violet after the letter he had lately written to her, and her reply) began to upbraid her for her preference of D'Arcy, which, he said, was undisguised.

This language was not well received; and, with woman's pique at being scolded by a lover she did not love, Miss Woodville answered, that there were others, and not himself, who were the best judges of her conduct, and had the best right to interfere in it. Thrown off his guard by this rebuke, Lord Stanmore exclaimed, "And is it possible you can think of being the slave of

D'Arcy, who, at the very moment he is professing love to you, is thoroughly involved with another woman? I care not if you tell him I told you this—nothing signifies now to me. But of him I warn you. He has no heart to give, and of you he is utterly unworthy."

Violet felt sick at heart when Lord Stanmore pronounced these words. "Of whom are you speaking?" she asked with a tremulous voice: "with whom is he, Mr. d'Arcy, involved?"

"Names cannot matter to you, you will not suspect me of an untruth; what I have said I would have said in D'Arcy's presence—he could not have denied it."

"But why, then, is he your friend—a person you think so ill of?"

"The person who is perfectly fit to be my friend, may be most unfit to become yours."

"I have nothing further to reply to your remarks, my Lord," said Violet Woodville, almost passionately. For a moment her usual gentleness was overset by the anger as well as the bitterness of her feelings.

"I am prepared to meet your coldness," continued Lord Stanmore; "but it shall not hinder me from telling you that I see you ready to sacri-

fice everything—yes, everything, in time, I have no doubt—and to D'Arcy. I may be led away by the jealousy which you have so fearlessly caused me, and it may be true that I have no right to interfere; but I think the very force of my attachment to you gives me that right, as it does the power, certainly. If you knew how much I have thought of you! God forgive me! if, even while I watched over the sick bed of my mother, I remembered you as a consoling angel! With you to have fled from the world, to have seen you as my wife, to have owned it, and to have been proud of it! These *have been* my visions at moments when I thought your heart might be truly mine. And then D'Arcy came, and he has worked the ruin of every hope I ever formed!——Villain!"

"Say not that," cried Violet; "Mr. d'Arcy has done you no harm; he has never spoken to me against you, as you have done against him this night."

"Ah! I see you cannot forgive me for the truths I have told you. How you must love that man! I wish he was dead!" said Lord Stanmore, bitterly: "I abhor him!"

"You are horribly unjust, and you terrify me."

"Do I? I beg your pardon—but you forget that he *was* my friend; and I did not think this wretchedness would have been occasioned me by him."

"If Mr. d'Arcy knew it, he would be sorry, I am sure."

"Sorry!—oh, no, that's not likely. I, his friend!" continued Lord Stanmore, incoherently: "the baseness—to dare——again I beg your pardon: I cannot help my own violence: you have no conception of what I am enduring; you would forgive me, if you knew how I loved you—how I have cursed myself for that odious letter I sent you; what I would have given, if it had never been written—and you hate me for that more than ever, do you not?"

"I never hated you, Lord Stanmore."

"*Now* you are lost," he continued, without heeding her reply. "You could not, if you would, give me back the heart which is D'Arcy's; but," he added, in a voice of deeper feeling, "do not destroy every illusion—do not become a guilty thing—let not even D'Arcy teach you that; love *him*, if you will—make him your god, and lavish upon him the whole treasure of your first affection—die for him—let your heart be the

bruised token of his power: cherish him while you live—pray for him when you are dying—but, oh! allow him not to bring you to dishonour!"

Lord Stanmore's words became hardly audible, while he went on speaking with great emotion.

"From this degradation, let my prayers preserve you! Spare me that—not for the sake of the good will you bear me, but for your own. You do not know what vice is. It is your very ignorance which has made you so beautiful in my eyes; and I do think that, were I to see you debased, I could never believe in woman's purity again. Would that you had never known D'Arcy!—and shall I live to see you his victim? Surely Heaven never made you to become the child of sin; or, if it did, it would blast a portion of its very self. I could immolate to shame every created thing—I could believe in an angel's fall, but not in yours!"

Lord Stanmore ceased. Pale and tremulous, Violet had listened to each word; terrified at his vehemence, and filled with nervous dread, she yet, more than all, remembered the assurance that D'Arcy was devoted to another. Overcome, at length, with the extremity of agitation, she suddenly leaned towards her mother, and drooped

her head upon her shoulder. Lord Stanmore had not seemed to observe her; and, as if he hardly knew what he was about, he rose, without looking towards her, and left the box.

The two senior Woodvilles had been sitting as much to the front as possible, during this conversation; and, besides listening to the music, Mrs. Woodville had contrived to carry on a constant dialogue with her *sposo*. Once only she ventured to look round at her daughter with the mere tail of one eye; but, seeing how much Violet was apparently engaged, she determined nothing should induce her to commit the like imprudence again, and in that direction she took special care that poor Woodville should neither see nor hear at all.

It was a loud opera; and, as Lord Stanmore spoke very low, it may easily be imagined that his conversation passed unheard.

Mrs. Woodville's reflections, in the meantime, were very similar to those of the maid with the milk-pail, in the fable; and *its* overthrow could not have dashed that damsel's projects more completely than were Mrs. Woodville's, when she beheld her child's pale face reclining on her shoulder, and, at the same moment, saw Lord

Stanmore retreating from the box. Consternation seized the parents; and, in their alarm for their only child, they thought but of restoring her.

Violet had not fainted; but she earnestly expressed her desire to return home.

"Oh, perhaps Lord Stanmore is gone to see for our coach?" said Mr. Woodville, looking round. "Did you tell him, my darling, that you wished to go?"

"No, father; but do you see for it."

At this instant the box again opened, and it was to admit Mr. d'Arcy and Mr. Brown.

Mr. Brown was a vocalist, smitten with Miss Woodville, and, having met D'Arcy on the grand staircase, it occurred to him that if that gentleman were going to visit the Woodvilles, he, Mr. Brown, had as good a right to go likewise; and he determined to take the opportunity as well, deeming it expedient also to scrape acquaintance with Mr. d'Arcy, so as occasionally to seem to belong to him.

D'Arcy was much astonished when he beheld the drooping Violet, leaning on her mother's shoulder; but he was still more so when, on speaking to her, he received no answer, and she closed her eyes.

"A little air,—more salts,—eau de Cologne!" cried Mr. Brown; "if Miss Woodville would take a little more salts to smell?" and he appealed to D'Arcy, who surveyed him for the first time with something between contempt and curiosity.

"Violet 's quite ill, Mr. d'Arcy," said Woodville, "so I am going to see for our coach, and perhaps you and Mr. Brown will have the goodness to take care of them while I am gone."

"Could you take an arm, Violet, and go down stairs?" inquired her mother; "and then we shall be ready." Violet answered in the affirmative, and D'Arcy proffered her his aid, but it was rejected in silence; and Mr. Brown stepped forward to offer his.

"I shall only lean upon mamma," said Violet, and she did as she said, while Mrs. Woodville availed *herself* of D'Arcy's assistance. As they moved on, he inquired the cause of her daughter's indisposition.

"Indeed I do not know," answered Mrs. Woodville; "she was talking too much, and overexerting herself, I think. But you are much better now, Violet, an't you?"

Violet answered, "Yes," in a more restored

voice, and added, "I could even go back to the Opera, if you wished it, mamma."

D'Arcy looked at Violet, and tried to penetrate the cause of her changed manner. In vain he sought to meet her eye, or to induce her to speak to him. The carriage was now ready: her father now hastened to inform them; and, as an excuse for helping Violet into it, D'Arcy seized her hand, but it was eagerly withdrawn; and he saw the Woodville equipage disappear,—while he remained standing on the pavement, in astonishment at this novel conduct on the part of Violet.

"The heat of the house overcame her, I am inclined to imagine," said Mr. Brown, with a facetious air, and addressing himself to D'Arcy.

"Sir!" said D'Arcy, staring at him,—"Yes;" and he walked away, leaving Mr. Brown to comfort his *amour propre*, by muttering, "Vulgar manners, I think, upon my word!"

As for Violet, she remained in an agony of mind. Much as there was to annoy her, she would not have suffered so deeply, if our feelings could ever be disturbed in proportion to their real cause, rather than to the way in which we view that cause.

She was stung to the quick by every word Lord Stanmore had uttered. She could not bear his foreseeing her degradation as a thing possible. —and might not the supposition (she asked herself, as she had done before) occur to D'Arcy? This was worse still; what woman would not rather be thought ill of by all the world, than that a lover should dream she could live to err?

Then she remembered Lord Stanmore's assurances, that D'Arcy's heart was already engaged; and when she gave way to this reflection, her misery was inconceivable. Not only was she wounded by the fact, but the deceit of her lover affected her still more powerfully.

We are so unwilling to confess the faults of any one we love; and this night, for the first time in her life, Violet learnt, that "la disgrazia di non piangere e una delle piu crudeli ne' sommi dolori*." Her grief too partook of a violence that hardly accorded with her character.

"Il est de fait que les amants se montrent plus impitoyables les uns envers les autres que les ennemis les plus irréconciliables."

And upon this true observation her sensations may be best understood.

* Silvio Pellico.

Violet, of course, resolved never to speak to D'Arcy again. At one moment she determined to write to him, to inform him of everything Lord Stanmore had said, and to express the height of her contempt. Sometimes she thought she would supplicate him herself to tell her the truth; for, despite of all her anger, Violet involuntarily felt that if D'Arcy were to deny every word, she should believe him. She took up her pen and composed her letter; but when she read it over the next morning, her good sense pointed out to her the imprudence, or perhaps the indelicacy, of sending it to him.

She was in hopes all day long that D'Arcy would call, that she might show him she never meant to speak to him again, by leaving the room the moment he entered it; but D'Arcy did not call.

To her parents, Violet assigned no reason for her illness at the Opera, and professed herself unable to account for Lord Stanmore's sudden departure from their box.

"Some lover's quarrel, I am sure," said Mrs. Woodville to her husband, "that will all come right again, but we must have patience. I own I am disappointed, for I declare I thought the

young man was going to propose; did not you, Charles?"

"Indeed I do not know why you thought any such thing," replied Mr. Woodville; "all I know is, I wish something or other was settled. Dupas was talking to me about it yesterday. He says, what's very true, these young men don't think of marrying,—all they think of is amusement. There's young Brown,—only you won't be civil to him,—why should not Violet marry him? he is a very proper sort of person; and I know his uncle has made money. With him one might know where one is; but as for all these dandies, they drive me out of my wits. Don't I see that D'Arcy flying about the girl, and making a fool of you besides, for it's the truth; and whispering, and following us wherever we go,—and humbugging me, I am ashamed to say, almost as bad as he does you, for I never know what he would be at, he is so cunning about it all; and to us he is as if butter would not melt in his mouth, notwithstanding he looks as if he were the Grand Turk."

"Oh, Mr. Woodville, you know you have always had a prejudice against Mr. d'Arcy; I am sure he is a very good-looking——"

"Good-looking!—yes, I dare say; that's always the way with a woman. What do his looks signify to me? Good-looking!—that makes a great deal of difference, I suppose! and are we all to act like fools, because a man is good-looking?"

"Bless me! Mr. Woodville, don't be so cross."

"I am not cross, Mrs. Woodville: you should not provoke me by saying a man's good-looking: what's that to me? It is not that I have any malice against Mr. d'Arcy—I will be hanged if I ever know exactly what I think of him; and it is certain, so far, he is like a thorough gentleman to me. But he is always here, and that other one is just as bad—just: he does not ask my consent to marry my daughter; and if he ever meant it, why does not he? What's to hinder him—he is of age, and his own master."

"I never knew anything like your unreasonableness: you speak as if you hadn't two grains of sense, sometimes; you would spoil everything by your impatience; and as for Brown—I would not, upon any account, that anybody thought that Violet was dreaming of condescending to him!"

"She may come to worse condescensions than that, Mrs. Woodville."

"I don't know what you are meaning to insinuate against your own child," replied the lady, indignantly.

"I am not insinuating anything: as for Lord Stanmore, that I don't say so much about; there might have been a chance of getting him—he had only to do as he chose; and when a young man gets his head full of love, he will do a good deal."

"Well, and pray why shouldn't Mr. d'Arcy want to marry Violet, supposing Lord Stanmore does not?"

"That's just your uncommon folly!—I cannot help calling it so; you put me out of patience with so much nonsense. Now, I should like to know what you see in Mr. d'Arcy's face to make you think he will marry my daughter?"

"Why shouldn't he as soon as his friend Lord Stanmore, pray?"

"In the first place, he has no money; and, in the second place, he is not a man that would lower himself so far, if Violet was as beautiful as a saint—or I am much mistaken."

"No money!—how are you sure he has no money?"

"Because I have heard it of those that are likely to know."

"It does not matter," continued Mrs. Woodville; "he belongs to great people; and who knows what he may not be some of these days?—besides, he is always a gentleman."

"Yes, there you are again! I know who fills you up with this nonsense; but I am not a man that finds fault when there is no occasion. Mrs. Norris may do as she likes; but the end of Miss Emily is not seen yet. I won't have the respectability of my family endangered—other people may do as they please; but I will have a little better order kept in my house; gentlemen shall not be coming in at all hours of the day: and I beg, in future, Violet may be taught to think of those, in a becoming manner, who properly ought to think of her.—Violet is ill. Do you think I don't see that, between them, these lovers of hers have been worrying her to death? They are all of them an unprincipled set of young rascals; and I have opened my eyes to see the mischief of what they are doing to me and mine."

"You are in a bad humour, Charles," said Mrs. Woodville, in a mitigated tone; "and I shan't say any more to you now; it is of no use."

"No, it is not; so don't say any more—only

please to remember what I have told you, and to mind it, that's all."

Violet continually expected that D'Arcy would call; he could do so very easily, she thought, as there was the excuse of inquiring after her; but the day passed, and D'Arcy had never been.

"Hummings," said Violet, when she went to bed, "has no one called?"

"No gentleman, Miss; but Mr. d'Arcy's servant was here, to leave his master's card, and to inquire how you was."

"But then, Hummings, Mr. d'Arcy was in his cabriolet, and his servant came to the door?"

"No, Miss, he warn't, for there wasn't no cab. I looked, to see if Mr. d'Arcy himself was a-nigh the house, but his young man walked on of himself, till he turned the corner."

Violet wondered why D'Arcy had not called; there could be no doubt he would yet do it, however, she argued—and another day dawned, and with it her expectation of seeing him. She longed so to show him her displeasure—to convince him that she never would forgive his perfidy—for perfidious she considered him ever since Lord Stanmore talked of his heart being another's. Alas! and the remembrance of those

words occasioned her the tears—they were such heart-felt ones; but another day passed, and D'Arcy came not.

Violet paid a visit to Emily Norris, pour se désennuyer.

"Well, I do wonder you have not seen Mr. d'Arcy," said Emily, when Violet had told all of her present grief that she had to tell.

"But, good heavens! it quite shocks me to think how sillily you have been behaving; why you might have married Lord Stanmore, Violet!"

"Oh, never mind that, Emily, it is only Mr. d'Arcy that I care about."

"Yes; how much you are in love with him! I will tell you what, Violet;—I will ask Harcourt about him,—not so as to betray you, leave that to me; I shall see him to-morrow,—we are great friends just now; so don't fret any more. Mr. d'Arcy is ill, or engaged, or gone to the country for a few days,—you will see; or, perhaps, he is only playing sulky, for you know, though you had cause to be angry, D'Arcy could not guess that anything so unlikely should have happened as Lord Stanmore telling you what he did; and he must have thought your conduct very odd, and very unaccountable."

Emily was as good as her word in making some inquiries of her admirer. In consequence, on the first occasion that he met with, Mr. Harcourt addressed D'Arcy, by saying—

"D'Arcy, may I ask if you are still in love with that Miss Woodville?"

"To be sure I am."

"That's being very constant, for you; but I want to know why you have not been near her lately?"

"So, Miss Norris has desired you to ask these questions, eh, Harcourt?"

"Why, yes—she has. She said——(You know the Woodvilles and Mrs. Norris are great friends,) and Emily said she was sure that pretty little sylph, the girl, was worried to death about something, and that she knew you had not been about the Woodvilles lately, and she asked me what was the reason, or if you were in town. Now what have you been at?"

"On my word, nothing; but," added D'Arcy, with his frequent sneer, "I am not a marrying man,—you are, I believe;—and the poor Woodvilles are too good for me."

"Ah, then I understand you. You have been an unsuccessful suitor, and the little creature will not be your mistress?"

"I own to you, I never ventured to ask her."

"Why, D'Arcy," said Harcourt, opening his eyes, and rousing himself from his usual nonchalant manner,—"Why, D'Arcy, you don't say so? You will never make me believe that."

"I don't see why,—after all, I am such a very modest fellow."

"I did not know it, and neither do other people."

"I assure you it is true, Harcourt; and it is very often the greatest disadvantage to my advancement in life. I have the humblest opinion of myself; I would give anything for the assurance of Goring, of D——, or of C——," continued D'Arcy.

"And so you have given up the poor girl?" Mr. Harcourt continued.

"Rather say, she has given me up."

"You know Stanmore is gone back to Brighton, so he will not stand in your way."

D'Arcy's countenance looked somewhat bitter, and his lip curled into an icy sneer,—*his* sneer, as he haughtily replied, although addressing his friend Harcourt,—

"As she is neither his wife nor his mistress,

Stanmore's presence or his absence, I presume, must be a matter of indifference to me."

"And how, all this time, are you going on with your other lady?"

"Much as I have always done; and my humble disposition has stood in my way there likewise."

"Ah, I don't understand you," said Harcourt, at length. "I wanted to consult you about Emily, but I don't like your mystifications to-day; however, if you like, you shall go shares with me in a thing I am to be let into in Casselford's stable. I am going to-night to the One Tun, in Jermyn-street,—if you choose to accompany me, we will talk it over; and I will own to you I am not sorry you have not made a prey of that Woodville girl, for she is Emily's great friend, and it would have shocked her so. Have you seen Mrs. Skiffney?"

"No."

"Then go to the Haymarket to-morrow;—we will all go. I should like to hear your opinion: 'pon my soul I think her head and shoulders the finest thing I ever beheld."

"Is she good?"

"Very; just the thing for you. So you have not seen Mrs. Skiffney!"

"I have had so much to do lately, and am so bored about my place under government. But we will certainly go to the Haymarket to-morrow, and see this new launch you tell me of."

"Ah, it will do you good, D'Arcy," said Mr. Harcourt, affectionately; "for you are looking horribly bilious."

Emily Norris, as has already been said, partly from friendship, and partly from curiosity, tried to discover, through Mr. Harcourt, to whom Lord Stanmore could have alluded when he spoke of D'Arcy's divided heart. But her efforts were unsuccessful, Harcourt either did not know, or would not tell; perhaps he had no idea of betraying D'Arcy.

"I wonder how you can like Mr. d'Arcy?" said Emily, inquiringly; "he is half inclined to be disagreeable."

"My beloved, he is the cleverest fellow in the world."

"But I believe you are all afraid of him."

"I vow I think we are, sometimes, now you have put it into my head."

"What does he do? Is he rich?"

"They say he lost upon the Derby last year?"

"I saw him once, myself, talking to a lady in Grosvenor-square. She looked handsome, and wore a hat made of blonde, and I remembered the shape of it at the time; I and mamma were passing at that moment. Is Mr. d'Arcy in love with some lady in Grosvenor-square?"

"If he is, he does not tell me; but he is always in love with a hundred women at a time; he never cares for any of them, he throws them over, and then he affects that they ill-use him. Your little friend had better keep out of his way. Besides which, I do not think he cares for her; and he is going abroad shortly. Where's Mrs. Norris?"

"Mamma is writing a letter she says must go by the post," said Emily, laughing; and in five minutes more Mrs. Norris entered the room, lamenting she had not been able to come sooner; for she said, "though I am not a foolish prude, Mr. Harcourt, I never like to brave prejudices; and as young ladies are in the habit of having a chaperone, I always try to be with Emily when she sees gentlemen; however, I left the door

wide open, and that's much the same thing, is not it?" continued the excellent Mrs. Norris, with a complacent smile.

Emily Norris faithfully reported to Violet the substance of all she ever could extract from Mr. Harcourt about D'Arcy.

"He allowed to me," said Emily, "he met D'Arcy, and had asked him why he had not seen you lately, but that he got no answer from him; and I have tried since then to find out what sort of person Mr. d'Arcy was, and I asked if he was a roué, but Harcourt only answered in his usual way—you know his way—he is so indolent sometimes."

"No, I never heard him called a roué; in short, Harcourt seemed stupid about it, or else it was his indolence. I wish you would forget D'Arcy."

"Impossible! my dear Emily, all I wish is, to see him once more, only once. I only want to tell him all I now think of him, and that I forgive him, and that I never wish to see him again!" answered Violet, sighing profoundly.

"He would tell you you were very foolish, and begin making love all over again."

"He could not; I should convince him that I knew every word he said was false, and that I was acquainted with his affection for another person."

"Which, of course, he would deny."

"No; he could not tell an untruth."

"Nonsense! as if he would think *that* an untruth."

"D'Arcy would not tell a falsehood," persisted Violet Woodville, while the tears rose to her eyes.

Poor Violet! The days passed heavily now, and everything seemed changed. As long as we are in love, or rather, I should say, during the intervals that our love runs smoothly—few they are, few and far between—but during these intervals, the presence of the adored one is as the sun of our day; and its influence is still felt, and its beneficence shed upon every other object with which we come in contact.

Those who are in love, and who go on for awhile happily, live entirely in a world of their own; much that was of importance becomes a matter of indifference to them; they rejoice in a fine day without knowing it, and when a rainy one comes, they do not perceive it; everything

with them is *couleur de rose*, and they never guess that the hour of trouble is but deferred, and that they are drinking then

> "The cordial drop Heav'n in our cup has thrown
> To make the nauseous cup of life go down,
> On which one blessing God might raise,
> In hands of atheist, subsidies of praise."
>
> LORD ROCHESTER.

But when some evil change occurs, and they are awakened from their dream, then indeed they think it has been one, and there is no saying how mournful a heart they bring to the gayest scenes, how broken a spirit reposes in that which should be the happiest home.

Violet Woodville was now undergoing all this, for two weeks had passed away and she had not seen or heard of D'Arcy. Emily Norris could tell her nothing more than that she believed him to be still in London, which Violet had begun to doubt. It was the month of August, and he might be gone into the country.

Over and over again she questioned herself as to the reasons for D'Arcy's total neglect of her. Sometimes she conceived that he had either guessed or ascertained all that Lord Stanmore had told her, and that he guiltily felt ashamed of meeting her. It was a *naïve* supposition, and

if it recurred often it was as often discarded. Violet felt that this was not in accordance with what she knew of D'Arcy's character. He was not ill, since it was clear Mr. Harcourt would have said so to Emily. Then, all other supposititious excuses would be as nothing in the case of a true lover. Had he ceased to love? No, for that would happen gradually; and by means of that freemasonry which exists between lovers, notwithstanding her disdain towards him, Violet felt that very night at the Opera D'Arcy was as much engrossed by her as ever. Was it then possible that mere anger had induced him to stay away? But, thought Violet suddenly, but suppose I am wronging him altogether? but no; Lord Stanmore would never have stooped to deceit! no; yet he might possibly be mistaken: and then, if poor D'Arcy should be blameless!

Imagining that D'Arcy considered himself unfairly treated by her, Violet thought it was possible that indignation might make him refrain from seeing her. She did not know what the experienced could have told her, that it becomes more urgent with us to tell a once beloved object that we hate them, we trample upon them, we

despise them, than it ever was before to declare how passionately we adored them.

The Woodvilles noticed the grief of their child, and could not divine its direct cause, whether it was owing to having quarrelled with Lord Stanmore, which she let them suppose was the case, or whether it was owing entirely to Mr. d'Arcy's absence. They often spoke of him, at least Mrs. Woodville did, and wondered why he never came; and Mrs. Woodville asked Violet if she had quarrelled with him likewise, for her behaviour to D'Arcy at the Opera had passed unnoticed by both her parents, on account of her illness. Only once, when she was alone, and M. Dupas asked, in his kindest voice, why she was unhappy, for he was sure she was so? and why had she given up all her admirers so suddenly? Violet replied that she did not know whether Mr. d'Arcy was in town;—"Do you think he is, M. Dupas?" The old man fixed upon Violet a glance of inquiry, but her pale cheeks and sunken eye denoted too plainly that she was unhappy, and that was an answer.

"You may trust me, *mon enfant*," he said, compassionately, "I am sorry for you. What is it you want to know about Mr. d'Arcy? Is it not

at your desire he has left off coming to see you? I had hoped it was."

"No."

"How then?"

"I don't know," said Violet, listlessly; and, too unhappy even to discourse on the cause of her grief, she left the room.

Still the Woodvilles, *père et mère*, were very gay, and continually making Vauxhall parties, or going to Greenwich, or dining at Richmond, chiefly to procure diversion for Violet, at least so said Mrs. Woodville. Very often, on pretence of illness, Violet would excuse herself from joining these "pleasure parties," to use the phraseology of Mr. Brown, who continued to be most assiduous in making love,—no, I mean paying his addresses to Miss Woodville,—who, poor girl! now absolutely sickened at the sight of him.

And here, as M. Dupas had predicted, was one evidence of her misfortune. Having once associated, and intimately, with a person of real refinement, she could not like those who possessed not the same advantages, and towards Brown, especially, there is no expressing the dislike Violet felt; and nothing but her sweetness of

temper enabled her to disguise her contempt under the garb of cold civility.

Mr. Brown was not repulsed, as he might have been, by Violet Woodville's dislike to him, because he did not conceive it possible. He looked in the glass and saw his own face, and the coat, etcetera, which clothed his person, and said to himself,—it is out of the question for any lady not to think me extremely handsome,—and then I am certainly an elegant man, and, I am sure, that on particular days, when I take pains, I look as much the gentleman as any one that I know.

Love might draw his bow-string and take aim at an armadillo, and, for what I know, his aim might be successful. But let him try to make a woman fall in love with a man (no matter whether really vulgar or not), but whom that woman thinks vulgar, and Cupid's arrow would fall blunted to the ground. There is something repugnant to feminine nature in the detection of vulgarity. A woman may be devotedly in love with every description of villain you may please to name, but, if she has any delicacy of mind whatsoever, she cannot even put up with one whom she esteems vulgar.

No wonder, then, that Violet Woodville, with her head and her heart full of D'Arcy, could not endure the attentions of Mr. Brown.

"What do you think of her, D'Arcy?" cried Mr. Goring, who was one of a party of young men occupying the front seats of a public box at the Haymarket.

"Why, I don't fancy her,—nevertheless, she is a spirited little devil."

"Take my glass," said Mr. Harcourt to D'Arcy, "yours is not a good one—mine is excellent."

D'Arcy accepted the *lorgnette*, better to contemplate the lovely Mrs. Skiffney, for she was the lady he and his friends were discussing. At this moment his eyes fell upon some persons in a box opposite, and D'Arcy lowered his glass suddenly as he distinguished Violet Woodville; returning it into the hands of Harcourt, he abruptly excused himself on the plea of suddenly remembering an engagement, and left the theatre.

"What was that for?" inquired Goring.

"Heaven knows,—D'Arcy is insufferable with his caprices. Goring, sit closer, or some cheesemonger will take his place,—and pray desire that

old woman on your side not to stifle us with her confounded musk, and to stop that young rascal her son from spitting his orange peel into my hat."

When had Violet Woodville's heart beat so keenly as it did this night when she distinguished D'Arcy? and how great was the pleasure it gave her? how great! She never remembered then all the anxious hours she had passed, or that he had caused them. She saw him once more,—was not that a foundation for a few moments, nay, for hours of real delight?

Violet was all alive to the fact that she did behold D'Arcy, for love is so dreamy a state of existence, that it happens when, by untoward circumstances, we are parted from the loved object, that we actually grow to doubt even the reality of their existence, and fancy that the words and the scenes which are indelibly impressed on our own bosoms are either forgotten by them, or are as if they had never been.

There is a great deal of nervousness in combination with all very highly-wrought feelings; and there is no limit to the imaginativeness of a mind of great tenderness, alarmed and grieving.

I never thought there was any exaggeration of sentiment in Werter's sending the little boy to Charlotte, that he might have something to behold, on which her eyes had rested. Our reason laughs to scorn this species of hypochondria of a love-despairing mind; but what, except some latent feeling of this nature, stirs up those inexplicable sensations in a lover's bosom, when only the name of his mistress is casually pronounced? or, if he sees, at a distance, her equipage, her servant, or anything belonging to her; what is it but the means thus afforded him, of confirming his conviction of her existence, and that he may behold her again and again, hear her speak, and to him? But, like the brilliant metal which must be wrought upon ere we can have an idea of its ductile power, Love must undergo a similar process before we can learn all the variety of feelings which are attendant upon it.

D'Arcy was no sooner beheld than he was gone: in vain Violet Woodville hoped to see him return to his place in the box, and then, when she despaired of that, she yet felt pleasure in the presence of his late companions, for to them she had seen him speak; they were his friends—they

had something to do with him; so she watched them, one by one, as they left the theatre; and, when all were gone, a sense of desolation crept over her that was hard to bear.

CHAPTER IX.

"How cruel seems this long estrangement!"

"In difference from those we love
Is the worst pang the heart can prove."

The day passed, and nothing more was heard of D'Arcy; but Violet continued to retain an expectation of meeting him once again. The party to Richmond, which our reader may remember some time before, he himself had proposed to her family that they should join. The arrangements were all made for it; and Violet, in the company of her parents and the Norrises, met the gay set of ladies, and the gallant gentlemen, who were the originators of the scheme. It was a beautiful day, and nature was dressed in its fairest splendour.

The company went upon the water, and the sound of mirth and music was ringing its melody up the banks of the Thames, as the boat glided on: there were jokes and laughter, and much

civility and much good humour—everything, in short, to gladden the heart for one half hour, if external things could ever do that; but they cannot, alas! always do so; and Violet Woodville was now one of the victims who are forced to wear a gay face, to conceal a most wretched heart. D'Arcy was not there. To Violet, everything about him now was so enveloped in mystery, that she became a prey to secret worry as well as sorrow.

But she was looking beautiful, and she was not left to herself. She was urged to talk, and at last, with that recklessness that sometimes seizes an impetuous mind, her spirit caught the tone from others, and gave way

> "To all that frantic mirth—that rush
> Of desperate gaiety, which they,
> Who never felt how pain's excess
> Can break out thus, think happiness."

Many of her admirers were charmed at this transition: her parents were delighted and astonished to hear her laugh out so roundly; and one or two of her former pretenders approached her, with hope revived of finding some signal of encouragement.

Mr. Goring especially remarked the change,

but he was sharp in his observation, and malicious, when it so suited him.

"Pray, what excuse did D'Arcy make for not coming?" he called out to the gentleman whom Violet was talking to, while he mercilessly fixed his eyes upon her face.

"I don't know; I thought he was to be one of us originally."

"Why is D'Arcy not here?"

"As if I knew!—he is in town; I saw him this morning."

"Have *you* any idea why Mr. d'Arcy is not here?" cried Goring to the victim of his inquiries.

"No," replied Miss Woodville, as steadily as she could.

"I only asked *you*," pursued Mr. Goring, "because he is so devoted an admirer of yours, that I thought *you* must know something of him. Really, as you are of this party, his absence is unaccountable." And Mr. Goring burst into a loud laugh, as if he had said something witty.

But it was not echoed by one other person; most of the ladies hated him, and with reason, and the men knew his brutality whenever he was inclined to be spiteful,—though, in this instance,

they guessed his intention without comprehending its nature.

The day of pleasure was over at last, and at one in the morning the unhappy Violet was allowed the repose of solitude,—that great blessing to the very unhappy. "Ah! la pitié n'est pas due à celui qui pleure dans la solitude!" may well be said, in the words of a French writer.

Violet's feelings were not of that acute kind which denies us the power of sleep,—hers were more the jaded feelings of continual anxiety; and, worn out, with a harassed mind, doubly fatigued with the exertion of false spirits, she slept, to wake almost unrefreshed, perhaps, and to endure more keenly than ever the grief of the time before. "La mente appena risentita ricorre alle idée abituali della vita tranquilla antecedente; ma il pensiero del nuovo stato di cose le si affaccia *tosto sgarbartamente* e il *dispiacere* ne è più vivo in quel paragone istante*." But the observation has been so often made, it is a hackneyed one now, only that it being so hackneyed proves how similarly we all pay alike the tribute of earthly anguish, and it is always a consolatory assurance that *our* amount of unhappiness is not

* "I Promessi Sposi."

greater than that of most other people, and that that which we feel, others have felt, and others are to feel.

"Write to D'Arcy," cried Emily Norris one day to her friend: the advice, if injudicious, was not ill meant. Emily was really sorry to see the impression D'Arcy's strange absence had made upon Violet Woodville, but she was not astonished at it.

"Impossible, Emily."

"I don't see that. His not coming near you for so long is very extraordinary, and you have a right to inquire the reason of it."

"How can you argue thus? I have no right of the sort. I feel deeply the singularity of his conduct, and D'Arcy must know that,—but that gives me no authority to write to him, and there would be something in the act that I could not bear."

"That ought to depend upon what you wrote; I am not counselling you to send a love-letter; but, if you did, I am quite sure D'Arcy would be at your feet in the next hour."

"Oh! Emily."

"But just write him," continued Emily, "two lines that might be published at Charing Cross,

—merely, that you are hurt at never seeing him, and that you wish to explain why you behaved so ill to him that night at the Opera."

"Never!—I never could. What would D'Arcy think of me?"

"No harm, I tell you again,—I will answer for it. It is not so much the things we do that signify, but the manner in which we do them. If you wrote in the sort of way I advise you, D'Arcy may think the better, but he cannot think the worse of you for it."

"It never can be my place to write to him, and the idea is shocking."

"Nonsense, you see things in a light of false refinement. I am quite persuaded there's a great deal of good about D'Arcy. I declare I like him now, though I never used to do it. Do you know there is something very piquant about D'Arcy?" pursued Emily Norris, in a half reverie. "He is very handsome; his eyes are quite peculiar. I am not surprised you are in love with him, but I believe I have told you that before,—I dare say I should, if he had made love to me, but he never did.—I don't think he was ever inclined to admire me, was he, Violet, eh?"

"No," replied Violet, with naïveté and absence, "no, he never told me that he admired you."

"Ah! I am not his style. Harcourt and D'Arcy are so different; the same sort of person never could please both those men. Oh, but about your writing,—now do it pray, Violet, I am sure you will not repent it; well, you will think of it, will you?" Emily went on for some time, endeavouring to persuade Violet Woodville to take the step she recommended, but unsuccessfully; however, in a day or two she returned to the charge, and by doing so very often she succeeded in making Violet less imperiously bent against it.

She was becoming quite miserable, and her father and mother were sadly distressed, by witnessing the change that took place in her spirits. Mrs. Woodville grew cross under it. She could not bear the want of her daughter's lovers, and she seemed to think she had a right to grumble, as if the misfortune was more hers than her daughter's. Poor Mr. Woodville felt far differently, but he was more truly unhappy than his wife.

The one who looked on with cooler judgment, but with equal feeling, was the old dancing-master. Each year, as he had grown older, so had he become more attached to the Woodvilles; and he would have rejoiced in seeing Violet splendidly

married,—or honestly so, in her own class, and pursuing her profession with an acknowledged character. But now nothing of the sort seemed likely to come to pass, and at the present moment there was a mystery about her that he could not fathom. One day when he was calling at the Woodvilles he found that they were out, but that Violet was not. He entered the sitting-room, and drew out of his pocket a Morning Post, which he began to read.

Violet soon made her appearance. "My father," she said, "is engaged at the Hanover Rooms, and mamma is gone to Madame Centi's."

"Well but, Violet, it is always enough if I find I can see you; only I wish you looked as happy as you used to do once. Stay, what is this?" and M. Dupas was silent for a few minutes, while he read something that had caught his eye in the paper.

"What is it?" Violet inquired.

"I am not sure," said M. Dupas, hesitatingly; "do you know what has become of Mr. d'Arcy, lately, mon enfant?"

"No, I don't; but do you know? What is it you are reading!" asked Violet, with intuitive quickness, and her eye glanced at the Morning Post.

The newspapers she sometimes obtained at her father's house had of late become of importance to her, not for the political intelligence they contained,—no, but in the account of dinners: valuable and rare occurrences in the month of September: in the list of names, she had now and then espied D'Arcy's, and was not that quite enough to invest every newspaper with a solid interest in her eyes?

The eagerness of her countenance at once induced her old friend to adopt the wise plan of showing to what he was alluding, by simply pointing to a paragraph, which ran as follows:—

"The Corsair sails on Tuesday, with Lord Rockemore and suite on board. Lady Rockemore and her eldest daughter, we understand, do not accompany his lordship. We have reason to believe George D'Arcy, Esq. intends forming part of his lordship's suite for the present; Mr. d'Arcy leaves town to-morrow."

At this moment Miss Norris, on a visit to Violet, bounded into the room, and this saved the necessity of commenting upon the intelligence of the Morning Post, both to M. Dupas and herself.

The instant she was alone with her friend, Violet showed the paragraph, and burst into tears.

"Write now, at once," exclaimed Emily, "there is no time to be lost: his going may not be true; but for heaven's sake endeavour to learn what it is that is at the bottom of all this. It will lead to nothing, only you will see him once again, which you say is all you want."

"It is very true, I must see him again; but what must I say? Emily, do not counsel me to do what is very foolish,—I would rather break my heart than that he should think ill of me!"

"Nonsense: it all depends on what you write." Emily snatched a pen: Violet felt so unhappy that she hardly knew how to reason with herself. The thought of having parted on such terms with D'Arcy, and that she should perhaps never see him more, was an irresistible idea which overpowered every other. Of late, too, she had been accustoming herself to think that she had behaved ill to him, and that Lord Stanmore was somehow mistaken in what he had said of him. Be it as it might, D'Arcy's influence, as the D'Arcy she had found him, had been gradually resuming its power.

It was so natural that a mind like hers should return speedily to a state of love and confidence; opposite sentiments were so uncongenial to a nature such as Violet's. She wrote then to D'Arcy.

There is no doubt that, under the same circumstances, another person, as sincerely upright, but with education, even merely a worldly one, would not have done as Violet Woodville now did. She would have argued, that however great D'Arcy's affection, still, as it was not an honourable one, it must be left to the unpleasing alternative he had appeared to adopt, (I am not sure, though, that this reasoning would have come from the very warmest heart in the world.)

"May I see you once again? I am conscious of being wrong in making the request, but I own I am very unhappy at thinking when we last met we were not friends. Believe only this, and then you will excuse my addressing you." Such was the letter Violet consented to write to D'Arcy. It was sealed, directed, and, under Emily's auspices, sent to its destination by means of that most convenient of all Mercuries, the Twopenny-post.

That Violet instantly regretted what she had done, when it was too late to be undone, is so exactly what everybody else feels when they think they have themselves been venturing to interfere with the course of their own destiny, that there is no use in enlarging upon the fact.

How poor Violet's heart beat the whole of that day and the next morning! She did not know

whether D'Arcy would reply to her by coming or by writing. She did not know whether he would do either; she could not be certain he was yet in town, so as to get her letter. No wonder, then, that during twenty-four hours she nearly died under a palpitation of the heart, such as most of us have suffered from during hours of anxious expectation.

About three o'clock in the afternoon Mrs. Hummings entered the usual sitting-room, but it was not clear why she showed herself. Mrs. Woodville was writing, and Violet was picking the gold off the skirt of a Sultana's robe, her mamma having the intention of turning it into a lining for some other garment she was in imagination contemplating.

"Only come to see about the fire, Mam. You have not told me which gown I am to prepare," said Hummings, then addressing Violet.

"Oh, directly I will show you, Hummings."

"No, no; pray go on with that now," cried Mrs. Woodville; "that will do about your gown another time. Brush up the hearth, Hummings, and then go, and don't interrupt me again." Hummings was obliged to obey, and Violet was obliged to sit still.

"Bless me, what do I see!" cried Mrs. Wood-

ville, suddenly taking the work out of her daughter's hands; "you have sewn the skirt up a second time, after undoing it once!"

"Heavens!" responded Violet, astounded at her own performance.

"And that wrong-side out, too!! What are you thinking of?" Mrs. Woodville said nothing more than this home question; she did not like to be very angry, and Violet presently found means to escape from the room.

"Hummings!" Hummings heard. "My gown," Violet began, by way of excuse, but she could not finish her sentence; she could only grasp an enclosed note, in a hand writing which as yet remained unknown to her, and which Mrs. Hummings held out. She read,

"Will you meet me to-morrow, at the usual hour, in the Gardens? Have no fear, I never can think ill of you.—Yours, G. D."

What happiness! Poor Violet was so intensely happy on receiving this note, that in her joy she threw herself on her knees and thanked heaven. Then she read it over and over again, and gazed at the hand-writing, and kissed it. But it is true, in many cases besides this, that not all the manuscripts in the British Museum can ever have been half so prized as only one little line, written by a

being that we love. The paper and the writing are almost sacred, and they bear with them a prestige, which time may add to, but which it cannot destroy,—and few, indeed, are the objects, even material or substantial, over which time has no power. For what feelings does it not annihilate, and what affections does it not impair? What events can it not obliterate, or at least deaden the remembrance of? But the handwriting of one we have sincerely loved acts as a talisman while we live, conjuring up so many feelings that it bewilders us; and with the conviction that the indulgence of such reminiscences too strongly disturb the even current of every-day life, we re-deposit the writing whose spell is so potent, and dread alike the pleasure and the pain of falling again under its influence.

CHAPTER X.

Dim not the starry diamond's lustrous blaze ;
Rob not the floweret of its balmy odour,
Nor clip the wing that would have soared to heaven.
Oh, let my heart's deep anguish plead to thee,
With more than mortal eloquence, appealing
To all the better feelings of the soul,
The nobler attributes which God has given,
To raise us from the devils we resemble.

Old Play.

It is necessary, for the reader's comprehension of our story in its present stage, to return to that night at the Opera when Lord Stanmore joined the Woodvilles there, and, on that occasion, allowed his violence to get the better of his judgment.

Lord Stanmore was one of those characters whose goodness is developed by prosperity, and on which the frowns of fortune have a contrary effect. There can be no doubt of his extreme love for Violet Woodville ; and when he talked of having thought of her as his wife, he did not exaggerate. It is fair to him to say, that perhaps

no other person in her situation would have inspired him with the same feelings. He had a high sense of worldly morality, and a keen one of the nicest honour. He had been spoiled hitherto, and he might have said, with Madame Montpensier, that his good qualities were all his own. He had not been less dissipated than most of his class are in this country, but his heart remained uncorrupted. There was a certain melancholy interwoven with his disposition, which had softened his mind without making it more impressionable; it only tended to give to his affections a greater degree of refinement, and to render him more alive to the wounds to which our feelings are ever subject.

I am always inclined to think, that the sentiments of men may be deeper than those of women. I know the ladies dispute this, and claim all the griefs of the heart as exclusively their own. I do not know why they are so eager for this monopoly; but any reasoning with them upon the point is, I have remarked, generally treated with contempt; and, almost invariably, they steadily adhere to the notion that the hearts of the male sex are more flinty than theirs, and that they do not suffer mentally as keenly as the fair Eves of the creation. But is it not reasonable

to conceive, that as the strength of men is greater, and their power of action more enlarged, their feelings should be likewise in proportion? It should seem, that if this were not the case, the lever would be wanting to complete the nature of their being, and when a man has the power to face the danger that a woman turns from, the same force that supports him then, it is reasonable to suppose, will be applied to all the circumstances of his life. Be assured, my lady reader, the sentiments of men are, to the full, as deep as woman's, but then, as their moral energy is greater, their hearts will withstand that which would break a woman's.

A girl under the load of misery which oppressed Lord Stanmore, as he left the Opera on the night we have recurred to, would, in many cases, have committed suicide; the idea never occurred to the young peer,—but still he felt wretched. Undoubtedly it is a great agony to love entirely, and to find another possesses the heart you would have rendered up life to have been blessed with, even for a moment. For the time, a blighting anguish ruled the spirit of the unhappy lover.

He pursued his way along the streets alone, as we can be in the midst of people, and felt the dreary hopelessness of a heart bursting and irri-

tated; and, as the vision of Violet Woodville rose ever before him, he almost cursed the Providence which had given him all things except that, which, to his passion, seemed the one thing needful. Originally, Lord Stanmore felt certain of having obtained Violet Woodville's preference, at least he was not prepared to find that this was to be the beginning and the end; neither, till now, did he know the force of his own love. It was only of late, when he looked round him, and compared this young girl with the rest of those who aimed at winning his fortune and his affection, that he felt aware that to him she was the phœnix;—all were so worldly, or so cold; so vain, or so uninteresting. There was not one of the Almack's beauties, married or single, that could rival Violet. He thought of every virtue she possessed, and of every charm that appeared to be one in his eyes, and, when he had done, his heart was breaking still,—for it loved; and reason, and the fullness of despair, were alike in vain against that earthly spell.

A hopeless passion, and the consciousness of a rival being preferred, are heavy to bear; and, in exulting youth, when prosperity is the glass behind and before us, then, indeed, it is a lesson learnt that lasts.

" Aimer ! parole triste, insultante ironie,
Pour qui vit un matin,
Mot fatal, et qui n'a d'écho dans cette vie
D'amertume et dédain.

" Ah ! choisir une femme, et créer autour d'elle
Tout un monde enchanté,
Et vouloir seulement, pour la faire immortelle,
Une immortalité.

" A ses moindres discours suspendre tout son être,
Emu d'un doux espoir,
Et mourir tout le jour, hélas ! à se promettre
Un sourire le soir.

" Et lorsque ce regard que le regard mendie
On n'a pu l'obtenir,
Sentir avec terreur à l'ame anéantie
Echapper l'avenir !

" A la vie, ou bonheur, dans sa douleur farouche
Jeter un morne adieu,
Tomber à deux genoux, le front contre sa couche,
Et s'écrier ' Mon Dieu !

" Au lieu de les laisser l'un sur l'autre descendre
Si pesans à mon cœur,
Mon Dieu ! ne pouvez-vous ensemble les reprendre
Tous ces jours de malheurs ! '

" Epuiser ces tourmens qu'en ce monde où nous sommes
On ne peut exprimer,
Lentement en mourir.... dans la langue des hommes
Cela s'appelle aimer."

La vie Intime, Poësies de A. LATOUR.

The French poet must have loved, or he could never have written these touching lines.

Other reflections started up to harass the mind of Lord Stanmore. How had he acted with respect to D'Arcy? Was it purely for Violet's sake that he had this night betrayed his friend,

and had not jealousy urged him to treachery? But was it deserving such a name? Was it not fair that merely as *her* friend he should warn her against the love of one like D'Arcy! indifferent, as he considered him, alike to her ruin and his wretchedness. "It was most base of him, and I have done right," exclaimed Lord Stanmore, and as he spoke, his mind's truth denied the inference.

He had reached his own home, and the grey light of the morning was coming in at the window. Lord Stanmore had opened it, that he might breathe, for he felt almost as if he had not the power.

The clock struck four. The sound of the striking appeared to give him a resolution, which he hastened to execute. He left his house and went to D'Arcy's lodgings. He knocked two or three times without receiving admittance. At length the landlady's head, in a night-cap, and a bonnet, by way of shading the delicate nature of her *coiffure*, appeared through the half-opened door.

"Is Mr. d'Arcy at home?" inquired Lord Stanmore.

The landlady stated that she did not know, but she believed not; Mr. d'Arcy had a key to let himself in at whatever time he liked. Wild,

for he was almost so, Lord Stanmore flew past the mistress of the house, and threw open the door of D'Arcy's apartments. He passed the first room into that in which he slept, and convinced himself that D'Arcy was indeed not at home.

The landlady followed him, and looked very cross: however, she knew Lord Stanmore by sight, and she condescended to hand him a lamp which stood in the passage, and pointed to the candles, which were on a buhl table; and told Lord Stanmore to replace the lamp when he had lighted the candles, that Mr. d'Arcy might not break his neck when he did come in. She then retired.

Lord Stanmore threw himself upon a couch. With one foot he kicked on the floor a knife-cutter, and a volume of 'Paul de Koch,' and with the other, one of 'Sand;' the reader's place being retained by the insertion of some small and tumbled notes, written on coloured paper. Alike lost in his reflections, and agitated by them, Lord Stanmore was only disturbed, at last, by a tired cabriolet driving up to the house door, which was presently unlocked; and D'Arcy's voice was heard giving directions to his servant for the following afternoon. D'Arcy mounted the stairs with a fatigued step, and threw open

the door of his sitting room. He looked pale and out of temper, as he cast his cloak, his hat, and his gloves on the floor, and he started with evident annoyance at the sight of Lord Stanmore.

"Stanmore!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said the other, making an effort with himself; "doubtless you are surprised to see me here. I suppose, I ought to apologise, but I must speak to you,—till I have done so, I cannot rest."

D'Arcy bowed in acquiescence, but his countenance expressed any thing but pleasure. He looked ill, besides, and worn out. However he pushed a chair into its place, and seated himself; then leaning his head, with his arms upon the table, he placed himself in a listening attitude for Lord Stanmore's communication.

An observer of human nature, a minute observer, would have made a study of the character of these two young men from their countenances and demeanour at this moment. The light was so placed as to fall exactly upon the faces of both, while the greater part of the room itself was almost obscured.

Lord Stanmore was at all times handsome, but for a man who until now had known no care, he

had an habitually melancholy expression. We have said before that his character was tinged with it; now, however, it clouded his face, while the swollen lip and gloomy eye gave a sure index of strong mental irritation, and in his manner of speaking there was something indicative of the nervousness of a delicate mind, wrought upon by the violence of passion. He flushed as he spoke, and the gloom at intervals gave way to flashes of fever lighting up his eye. He leaned against the back of the sofa, as if he tried to obtain self-possession by his bodily repose.

D'Arcy exhibited a different character: his countenance scarcely betrayed his mind; his features had much play, but they were strictly under command. There was not the same candour evinced by them, or, perhaps, D'Arcy's was a more worn countenance,—one as if it had lived to be the index of so many feelings, that it disdained to disclose them now. There was something very fine nevertheless in his brow, and altogether if you were inclined to distrust the man, it would not be for a small stake; and if there was any thing villanous about him, Schiller's description might be given of it: "Die Schande nimmt ab mit dem wachsenden Sünde."

But D'Arcy was harassed, and out of humour; we have no right to quote Schiller because a man looks ill, and finds his house disagreeably invaded at five in the morning. D'Arcy was always handsome, but yet he did not always look so. The more he was known, the handsomer he was considered, but he did not universally please, nevertheless, because his cold and somewhat sardonic expression was apt to offend, before he felt a wish to please. When he aimed at doing so, he never failed.

"I have seen the Woodvilles to-night," said Lord Stanmore, abruptly.

"So have I," replied D'Arcy.

Lord Stanmore continued, without heeding the interruption, "and I have done all I can to prevent that young girl falling a prey to you. I know you well, D'Arcy, and for once in my life I choose to tell you, that I consider that you are behaving ill,—shamefully ill!"

"What do you mean?" cried D'Arcy, looking up in displeased astonishment.

"What I say!—that I have warned Violet Woodville against you,—that I have told her your heart is professedly another woman's, and I have supplicated her not to become the mistress of George D'Arcy!"

D'Arcy coloured, and started from his chair; while he exclaimed in a tone of passion: "I should like to know what has given you the right to interfere thus in my concerns? Not our friendship, certainly."

"I will tell you why; because I loved her,—because I loved Violet Woodville, and, therefore, I did not choose to see her crushed by you; and, let me tell you, if you had had the smallest portion of generosity in your soul,—you would have hesitated in your determination to seduce so sweet a creature. You know her, and, therefore, you have not to learn that she is one so faultless that no one but a villain could successfully act the part you seek to play!"

"And yourself?" cried D'Arcy, sternly and interrogatively.

"No," answered Lord Stanmore with firmness; "no, I have tried—I may have wished it once; but as I have learnt to know her infinite purity, I have shrunk from a pursuit become, I think, dishonourable, when the object is one so much too worthy. However, I am convinced I had no chance of succeeding. She does not love me, but you have power over her, for you she does love. Use this power as you may, D'Arcy, and I say you are a villain!"

"Are you come here at five in the morning to pick a quarrel with me, Lord Stanmore?"

"I am not; but that is as you choose."

"You well know," said D'Arcy, "that one man has no pretext for addressing another as you have addressed me. I was not aware," he continued, his countenance assuming the withering coldness which made it at times almost hateful, "I was not aware that you were so very warm an admirer of Miss Woodville. Am I to understand by this tirade that your views are simply Platonic, or that I have interfered most unfortunately with a matrimonial speculation of your lordship's?"

Lord Stanmore's colour rose as he replied, "I neither regard your rage nor your cold-blooded sneers. What I do consider is that poor girl who believes in your attachment, and who may be ruined by the excessive art of one who actually does not care for her!"

"And you have cared," said D'Arcy, tauntingly.

"I have—there you are right; and I think it was not the office of a friend to supplant me where he knew I should most feel it."

"Neither was it the office of a friend to go and basely betray my errors, out of jealousy,

to one whom you yourself allow to have preferred me."

"You are not my friend," said Lord Stanmore, hastily; "that is past. All I aim at now is, if possible, to preserve a being whom I have adored, and whose guileless character has made an impression on me which her beauty could not have done. Yes, D'Arcy, I love her; and if you had not come like a devil between me and my happiness, she would have been happy too; for if it had not been for you, Violet Woodville would have loved me;—and proclaim it to the world if you choose. I would have made her my wife; and do you think that now I will sit tamely by, and witness your false professions of affection, in return for which that innocent one will barter her whole existence? and, instead of my wife, see her be, some day, your neglected mistress? The blessed alternative you will have brought her to! Do you think, I say, I would stand by and know all this, and not warn her of the fate that hangs over her?"

While Lord Stanmore spoke, D'Arcy's countenance changed; he appeared to reflect, and at length he slowly exclaimed in a softened tone, "And you have loved her even unto this!"

"And you have brought me even unto this!" rejoined Lord Stanmore.

"Allow me to observe one thing," said D'Arcy quickly. "Admitting your right to interfere to save"—and D'Arcy resumed the tone of irony—"admitting your right to do that if you could, most decidedly you had none to inform her of what you could not know to be true. Why did you tell her that I made false love to her?"

"Your attachment to another woman is a fact so glaringly known to all London, that I am only glad to be the first, and not the second, or third, or twentieth person who will tell her as much, perhaps when it is too late. Be assured, D'Arcy, that had your infidelity taken any other direction, I am the last man to trouble myself with anything that so little concerned me."

"My private affairs seem better known to you than it can be said that I ever made them—I have permitted no confidant."

"There are some *liaisons* too glaring to be a secret to any one."

"At all events, you could not tell the measure of my affection for that person or any other; and could not, with justice, stigmatise my declarations as false, be they made to whom it so pleased me."

"The lady is too young and too handsome,

otherwise the world might have surmised you were indifferent while she was devoted," answered Lord Stanmore coldly.

"This comes of her folly in letting it be seen," said D'Arcy, passionately, and as if thinking aloud.

"I am surprised, D'Arcy," observed Lord Stanmore, "that, lax as you are, and even with your principles, your heart does not fail at the thought of seducing that poor girl. Most men have some compunction when they fall in with so artless and so perfect a creature; for I conclude," continued Lord Stanmore, with a piercing look of inquiry, "that your opinion of her is as good as my own."

"On my word it is; and I am astonished that you think I should be able to seduce her."

"God forbid it!" said Lord Stanmore, burying his face in his hands, as if the reflection was too much to bear; and such, in fact, he felt it. It is probable that D'Arcy saw the emotion of Lord Stanmore, for his bearing ceased to be harsh, and when he spoke again it was deliberately.

"I wished," said Lord Stanmore, "to tell you that, in future, I shall do all I can to save her from you, as I would from any other man whom I thought she was in danger from. I would not

now, as I before said, seduce Violet Woodville, if I could, and I would have married her, I repeat."

"And why not still?"

"Still! No, she loves another, and half her charm is gone, in my eyes, as a wife."

"Your behaviour is highly chivalrous, Stanmore," replied D'Arcy, indulging in a slight sneer; "doubtless it would have its due effect upon Violet; but," added he, more gravely, "if all you say is true, I regret the past. I had no idea you thought of marrying, and, I must tell you, when I first fell in love I did not discover any reason for supposing I was supplanting you, in her affection, at least I never thought she cared seriously for you; and, if you remember, I told you, the first day we met after you had been to Brighton, that I had fallen in love with Violet Woodville. With regard to you, I positively feel that I have nothing to reproach myself with: I wish I could say as much with respect to her. But, if I have deprived Miss Woodville of an affection which was to prove of such advantage, I must endure regret all my life."

D'Arcy paused, he looked paler, and when he resumed speaking, it was with rather a nervous voice.

"I will retire," he said, "and I will leave you master of the field, to which I feel you have a better claim."

"If this conviction is your only motive for so doing, spare yourself the trouble of naming it," said Lord Stanmore. "for I am no longer thinking of proposing to Miss Woodville, if you allude to that; I merely wish by common means to prevent her future disgrace."

"Your words are wonderfully contradictory," replied D'Arcy, with asperity; "in one breath you talk of Violet Woodville's high-flown character, and in the next as if her salvation only depended on your most arduous efforts. However, my resolution is equally taken. On the whole, all that has passed is, perhaps, for the best. She is, indeed, too good to become the mistress of any man, and, what is more, I do not think I could ever have made her mine, even if she liked me as much as you say she does, but which I doubt. Now, listen:—I am going to leave town, and shortly England, and I will have nothing further to say to the Woodvilles, unless, indeed, Violet herself should be the person to recall me: that is a temptation I could not stand. We both know enough of her to be certain it is a most improbable one. You are now satis-

fied, I presume,—and I am tired," said D'Arcy, putting his hand to his forehead.

Lord Stanmore rose, and muttered something, which was not distinct, as he took his hat and quitted the apartment.

When he was gone, D'Arcy sat with his folded arms upon the table. He seemed lost in his own thoughts, and it was a deep sense of bodily fatigue that roused him at last, and then the single lamp was going out. He threw himself on his bed, but it was long before he slept, and, in the meantime, the morning was growing old.

It does not always answer to analyze the motives of action,—they are among the mysteries of our being, and are not seldom incomprehensible. Certain it is that there are times when a noble mind has the lowest level, and a hardened heart its moments of glorious aspirations. Is it for us to say that heart is irreclaimable? The inconsistencies which dignify or debase our nature have become a barrier into which the searchings of reasoning cannot penetrate. The bad and the good get so commingled, that we lose the one when we would separate it from the other. In some one individual act, perhaps, the good predominates unalloyed, but, even then, it may have been the impulse of a moment, and the

solely estimable point in an ill-regulated and unprincipled disposition; whereas a well-ordered character is never carried out of its equipoise. Such an one has not the struggles of being extremely virtuous. These fall to the lot of the feeble or the vicious, when the better principle conquers; we should, therefore, admire, without striving to penetrate all the unknown springs which have influenced the action. We will only remember that, while the good may play the hypocrite unto themselves when they are greatly righteous, he who greatly sins will yet despise self-deceit when he aims at duty. The good actions of a bad man are sometimes performed with more humility than those of the saints of this earth: there is often a simplicity in the virtuous deeds of a sinner, and, strange to say, as if their worth was only unappreciated by themselves. I am not talking of the Publicans and the Pharisees of the world. I mean to refer only to the upright amongst us, and the purer in deeds, and to those whose vice is the deeper because they have not cared to find it vice, and who sin and like it, and see not why they should not. I mean no sneer at goodness,—I mean no base allusion to the possible hypocrisy of virtue. The heart must be bad that would love to detract

from goodness; but a lesson may be learnt, if it is true that the pride of the good is developed when the humility of the wicked is so likewise.

I do not know what has suggested these reflections: if the reader thinks D'Arcy has given rise to them, he is at liberty to think so; but I do not say so.

D'Arcy kept his promise, such as he gave it, to Lord Stanmore, and, whatever feelings or motives induced him to give it,—if they were good, or if the effort cost him dearly,—he told no one, for that was not his way; and, besides, D'Arcy knew better than most men the infinite compassion we have for our own bosom's woes, and the infinite contempt and the slender pity we feel for those of all other people.

CHAPTER XI.

" A something all-sufficient for the *heart*
Is that for which the sex are always seeking;
But how to fill up that same vacant part?
There lies the rub—and this they are but weak in.
Frail mariners afloat, without a chart,
They run before the wind, through high seas breaking;
And when they have made the shore through every shock,
'Tis odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock."

BYRON.

D'ARCY could not go out of town, as he told Lord Stanmore he should, and as he had intended: business obliged him to remain.

Lord Stanmore, meanwhile, returned to his mother, and D'Arcy, as he himself thought, was within a fortnight of going abroad, at the very time when Violet Woodville wrote to him, and that the 'Morning Post,' with the usual accuracy of a newspaper, announced his departure for the next day.

D'Arcy was too acute a judge of human nature to be misled by Violet's letter. He only saw in it a proof of her soft and sweet character. But she did not know this, and when she wrote to

D'Arcy she was oppressed with shame. He reassured her when they met, and then it was she wept with joy.

D'Arcy was touched. "You love me, then?" said he.

"Yes," answered a low voice that tears were stifling.

D'Arcy sighed. Strange, perhaps, to say, but not to feel, Violet had not asked as yet for any explanation; neither had D'Arcy volunteered it: she seemed too happy; for hers was love indeed —the love that cannot remember a fault, when the object is in its presence.

> "Love is not Love,
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove:
> Oh, no! it is an ever fixed mark,
> That looks on tempests, and yet is not shaken;
> It is the star of every wandering bark,
> Whose worth's unknown altho' his height be taken."
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

At length, however, D'Arcy told Violet of the promise of not seeing her again, which Lord Stanmore had obtained from him.

"He also told me of the information he had given against me. I kept my word with Stanmore; and, after all he had been so good as to say, I concluded you would soon forget, and, probably, despise me. If I ever was generous, or

better than I knew myself to be, it has been lately, while I have undergone this ordeal, and attempted nothing in my own favour."

"But was it not true?—Is it false?"

"What, Violet?"

"That you love some one I do not know?"

"False! Oh, yes, but not that the world believes I do."

"Oh, Heavens!" exclaimed Violet, turning very pale; "I understand your evasion, Mr. d'Arcy—leave me!" and she resolutely stood still.

"My sincerity has then lost me your esteem?"

"Esteem! I did not think you could have deceived me thus."

"Listen to me—nay, do——you must! You have not heard me; in fairness you must listen to me. What, then, have I done? I have declared I loved you as I loved no other; and I declare it still."

"Then you are highly treacherous to another person."

"No, I am not; nothing should induce me to take so much pains to deceive any one: had I the inclination, believe me, I have not the time," said D'Arcy, half sneeringly, half earnestly.

"The time!—are you now laughing at me,

Mr. d'Arcy?" exclaimed his companion, while the tears rose to her eyes.

"At you? Oh, never!—but what I say is the fact."

"Then some one must have been as much misled as to your affection for her as I have been. I concluded that it was an error of Lord Stanmore's—a mistake; I was foolish to think so. Lord Stanmore could not have been wrong."

"You can then so easily believe me to be all that is contemptible?" replied D'Arcy.

"I do," answered Miss Woodville, as she again signified her wish that D'Arcy should leave her. Her cheek was deeply coloured, and her lip trembled. D'Arcy looked anxiously to seek compassion in her eyes—

> "Eyes so pure, that from their ray
> Dark vice would turn abashed away."

"Violet!" he exclaimed, with emotion, "what I have said is the truth; I have not deceived you or any one else: can you not conceive that it is impossible for me to compromise a lady whose name the busy tongue of scandal has already connected too much with mine? Even to you there are things I ought not to betray.. But if you are willing to put faith in me, do it not by

halves. I have declared I never will be insincere with you. I have been so with others—with many; but you are worthy of my better feelings; you have inspired them, I should rather say: I pledge you my word—and that I have never broken (even to a woman)—that I have not deceived you or any one else; and that I loved and love you better than all I have met with in this created world. Ah, Violet! if you knew me, you would believe me. If you knew me as I know myself, you might esteem me less, but still you would believe me."

"But you give no explanation, and what am I to think? A lady would not place herself—her character, at the mercy of every one, if at least she was not led on by the strongest belief in your affection?"

"The ungoverned mind of an ill-educated woman, under no personal control, may lead to anything. It is a character I have a horror of! —but not later than to-morrow I will put an end to a connexion which gives me no pleasure, and which may bring disgrace upon one unfortunate person, and misery upon another. Are you satisfied, Violet?——Then look at this." D'Arcy drew a letter from his waistcoat pocket. It was directed to him, and in a woman's hand. "There;

read the first lines of this, and say if they do not confirm what I have told you."

Violet read while D'Arcy held the letter.

"I knew I never had your love—you never flattered me with pretending that I had; but your compassion and forbearance ——"

This was all that D'Arcy thought it necessary that Violet should read.

"There exist strange people," she exclaimed, while D'Arcy folded up the letter; "but this lady must be lost to everything. Oh, Mr. d'Arcy, she must be out of her senses; have pity upon her, whoever she is, and point out to her the sadness of her conduct. Is she a young lady or a widow?"

"Neither," answered D'Arcy, laughing; "she is married, and to the very best of stupid men, I believe."

"Her husband alive?"

"Dearest! I assure you, husbands don't die so easily;" and D'Arcy laughed on in spite of himself, even while he breathed the influence of Violet Woodville's innocent character.

"Oh, if you knew how I love you!" said D'Arcy, fondly; "there is such a charm in every word you utter. What I would give to be able to live my life over again, and in the early part

of it to have met with you! I am sure I should have been better than I am now; I am convinced my destiny is linked with yours; I do not know how, but I have a strange presentiment of unhappiness comes over me; without you I cannot live, and united to you, misery would attend both of us. I am not good enough for the difficult position a marriage with you would place me in; I have no fortune, but while I exist my spirit will cling to yours: and the other day, as I sat alone and thought of you, I half dreamt—it must have been a dream—that my death and yours would be at the same time. I felt a strange pleasure in the idea. If I could not live with you, it would be an exquisite thing to die with you. Violet, would you die with me?"

"Yes!"

> "She turns and speaks; her voice is far,
> Far above singing!"

"Dearest!" said D'Arcy, softly, lost in the emotion of his own happiness at the conviction he felt of being so completely loved,—and they continued for some minutes in silence.

> "Joy like his, like hers,
> Deals not in words."

For it was joy, the pure and rapturous joy, of

affection in its best, its tenderest, and, above all, its purest moments. Everything is more ecstatic when it approaches Heaven, and love has its divinity, but it is only during one short moment, when itself can be forgotten,—

"And even the spirit of man is divine."

"And now I must again say this, Violet," resumed D'Arcy, "that when I promised Stanmore to give you up, it was the most virtuous act of my whole life. Had I loved you one atom less, or had you been less perfect in my eyes, I could have abjured the idea, and while I had the power I would have pursued you till I acted differently, far differently, from the way I have done," continued he, faintly smiling; "but I loved so much that for once I was not selfish; and yet now you shall not have to reproach me for everything. I fancy you could marry Stanmore, Violet; do so, and forget me!"

"Never, Mr. d'Arcy," replied Violet Woodville, eagerly.

"And why not? Attend to me while I have the courage to utter the words. You do wrong, my darling one: he is excellent, and you are worthy of sharing his destiny. You could not marry in the class you belong to; you were

meant for something better, and Stanmore offers you the bright career that should be yours. What would you have, Violet? He is not old, nor ugly, and is he not intellectual? I am not asking you to sacrifice yourself to rank and riches; but if you had been born to the fairest happiness, I know nothing that could insure it more than to marry such a man as Stanmore. Had he no other advantages, his very heart, with its generous feelings, is a treasure on which a woman might repose for ever in security."

"But I do not love Lord Stanmore."

"But you would, in time."

"No!"

"Yes, you would, Violet," said D'Arcy, mournfully; "trust to my experience."

"I shall not change; I know I never can be happy; besides, this is useless—Lord Stanmore would not now think of me."

"At this moment he would not; he is too proud, and he thinks you love me;—but I am—am going; and his affection will not be so easily overcome as he may now suppose. When once I am out of the way, he will be at your feet again; I am sure of it: so marry him, then, Violet. I will answer for your happiness, though you cannot!"

"Doubtless you are sure of your own, Mr. d'Arcy," answered Violet, with some pique.

Her lover looked reproachfully at her, and there was a sorrowful sadness in his expression.

"Oh, Violet," exclaimed D'Arcy, "if you can give me an unkind word now, my reward is indeed denied, and I am punished when I least deserved it!"

"Do not say so, Mr. d'Arcy."

"I must, for it is as I feel; it is hard to be reproached at this moment."

"Forgive me, then!" cried Violet, hastily; "was I unjust? I care so much for your affection, and it is that I thought of."

"I never before proved it so thoroughly," continued D'Arcy; "I have spoken against myself, and it has cost me an effort that Heaven may remember!"

At this moment the lovers were interrupted by Mrs. Hummings. She had remained at her usual respectful distance while D'Arcy and Violet walked on together. She now approached to remind them that they had turned up the walk a second time, and that her young lady would be expected at home.

D'Arcy and Violet parted without referring to

when they should meet again; both had a motive for this forbearance, probably.

"So, Violet, what do you think is the news?" were Mrs. Woodville's first words on seeing Violet after her morning's walk. "Wonders never cease."

"Yes," said Mr. Woodville, "it has all gone right for them; but it might have all gone wrong. It is only some folks have luck, and some have not,—that's all; nothing else."

"And some young ladies play their cards better, and some will not condescend to play them at all."

"And I think none the worse of those that don't," said M. Dupas, emphatically.

"What's the news?" Violet demanded.

"Oh, only that your friend, Emily Norris, is to marry Mr. Harcourt, forsooth! Much good may it do him," said Mrs. Woodville, with the most evident maternal jealousy.

"I am delighted!" exclaimed Violet, with a countenance that corroborated her words. "Dear Mamma, she will be so happy! Father, do walk with me to the Norrises. It is just what Emily wishes; and she is quite fit for it," continued Violet, speaking her thoughts aloud; "she will

make a very good wife; though she is not born a lady, she was intended for one."

"Is it joy at Emily's marriage makes you look so happy this morning, Violet?" asked M. Dupas, after he had watched her some minutes.

"Oh, yes, I am so glad of it," she answered, without meaning to tell an untruth. She did not know that seeing D'Arcy had made her look so radiant.

"I do feel much better this morning. Father, I will put on my bonnet, and you will walk with me to the Norrises."

"Very well, Violet, dear; but make haste."

Violet did not require the last injunction. The step of the happy is always quick—so Violet flew.

The Norrises were at this moment the most prosperous people, certainly, in the world; that is to say, they thought themselves so,—and, of course, the true measure of any one's prosperity must be to judge of it according to one's own view. Mrs. Norris had achieved the object of her secret ambition; and Miss Norris had so many reasons for being pleased, it would be impossible to enumerate them.

"Of course, Mr. Woodville," said Mrs. Norris, in answer to his congratulations, "of course I

feel flattered that my Emily should make so good a connexion; and I must say I think she deserves it. It has always been my aim to bring her up with the best principles, and an idea of conducting herself with propriety; it is conduct, Mr. Woodville, which I have endeavoured to teach her; I have a horror of anything that gives rise to talking,—there never was a word against Emily, thank heaven! and Mr. Harcourt declares himself to be the happiest of men. His affectionate behaviour towards me is quite delightful; it has touched me to the heart, I assure you."

"I am glad you like your son-in-law, Mrs. Norris," said Mr. Woodville, somewhat bluntly.

"He is a most gentlemanlike young man," continued Mrs. Norris. "It would all have been arranged much sooner, according to Mr. Harcourt's own wishes, but I, as Emily's mother, had feelings of delicacy; Emily having no fortune, and having been on the stage, I knew were reasons that Harcourt's relations might allege against the marriage. It is always necessary to respect people's prejudices, and I am the last person to wish to force my daughter upon any one; and Emily herself would have died at the thoughts of such a thing."

"And so, now Mr. Harcourt's friends wish him to marry Miss Norris?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Norris, boldly, but colouring a little; "yes, indeed,—yes, I may say they approve. He has no near relations, which is a good thing;—no father, you know, or anything of that sort. Well, Mr. Woodville, and how soon are we to hear of Miss Violet making a great marriage? She is so admired, I am sure, by the gentlemen."

"Why, yes, any one that looks at her must admire her," said Woodville, recovering his good humour, which, without his knowing it, had been a little ruffled by the exceedingly full-blown satisfaction of Mrs. Norris.

"There's a knock at the door," exclaimed that lady, who was not keeping her dignity in its usual quiescence.

"It is Mr. Harcourt,—yes, it is;" and Mrs. Norris, with a rush of ready-made maternal tenderness, flew from the chair to meet her future son-in-law at the door.

Harcourt looked gay and happy enough, but when he advanced without seeing Emily, his face betrayed his innate spoiltness, and he passed his hand through his hair, and indolently, if not

coldly, allowed Mrs. Norris to take his other hand between both of hers.

"Dear Mr. Harcourt, so good of you to come so early: Emily will be enchanted!"

"Why, of course, it's Emily I want to see, Mrs. Norris; and pray where is she?"

Mrs. Norris thought fit to look over Harcourt's implied rudeness, and told Emily's betrothed that she was in the little boudoir,—"My little boudoir; she has a friend with her."

"A friend! what friend,—what friend?" said the lover, sulkily. "Who ever heard of anybody having friends at this hour of the morning? Why it's not,—oh, by my *Breguet*, I see it is a quarter to one."

Emily Norris herself, and Violet, now entered, and when Harcourt saw who her friend was, he was appeased; for he could not help thinking what a much worse one his Emily might have chosen than the sweet and beautiful Violet Woodville.

She and her father rose to take leave, after making the most proper apologies for Mrs. Woodville's not having come with them; the real fact having been, that she could not undergo the sight of Mrs. Norris's self gratulation.

"Well, Violet, what do you think of them all?" inquired Mr. Woodville, as he walked home with his daughter.

"I like Mr. Harcourt well enough, as far as I have seen him, and Emily, of course, likes him; and she is quite pleased,—and that is everything; and she is so kind to me, and almost wants me to come and live with her."

"Well, that shows a good heart, at any rate, for the present; but she will soon get her head filled with vanity, I dare say."

"Oh dear, no,—I do not think that. Emily is such a different character from Mrs. Norris. She told me it was, after all, a surprise, when Mr. Harcourt proposed; for that she did not know what he meant to do, or which way it would end; and that she had been so worried lately, she says she is so glad to feel certain about it at last."

"And now, Violet," asked Mr. Woodville, in surprise at his daughter's unusual gaiety, "I would fain know what it is makes you look so much better? and why you are not breaking your heart as much to-day as yesterday, and every day for the last month past?"

"I do not know,—it is such a fine day!"

Violet's father was not a suspicious man.

Violet met D'Arcy again next morning in the gardens, and she went on doing so nearly every day.

Her happiness at having his society once more was quite enough to colour every hour of her present life; and, in the intoxication in which she lived, reason, without being less acute, had not the same power. So now she only knew she was wrong, without any longer staying to consider how wrong.

Love, with lovers, is such an inexhaustible theme,—and nothing by them is said so often but that it is not new when said again. There was not then any want of conversation between Violet and D'Arcy; we may remember, too, how very eloquent becomes even Cupid's silence.

D'Arcy was not always the same; sometimes he was restless and angry, without a defined cause, and would upbraid Violet, and not explain himself; and the very distress that this occasioned her, rivetted her affections more firmly to him. So true it is, that even the faults of those we love, when not carried too far, do but add to the prestige of affection. Diderot has somewhere said, "Celui qui ne connoit pas la peine n'est pas à compter parmi les enfans des hommes;" and

perhaps it is in some connexion with this principle, that we are fonder of a faulty being than of one of more perfection. With the former, is it that they are rendered dearer to us by their similitude to ourselves?—is it that, because of their faults, we feel more particularly that they are "à compter parmi les enfans des hommes?"

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